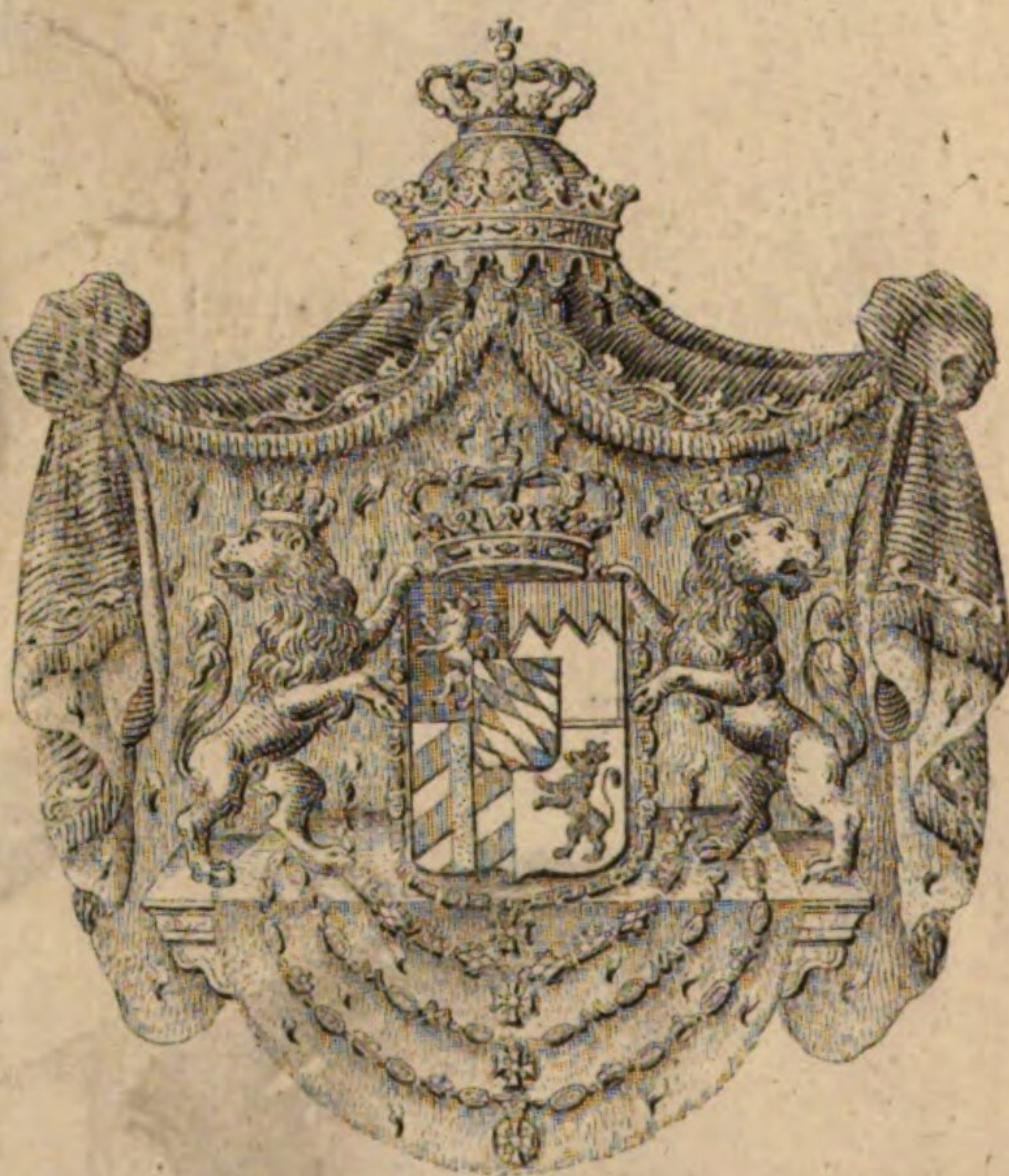


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A
VIEW OF NATURE,
IN LETTERS
TO A TRAVELLER AMONG THE ALPS.
WITH
REFLECTIONS
ON
ATHEISTICAL PHILOSOPHY,
NOW EXEMPLIFIED IN
FRANCE.

By RICHARD JOSEPH SULLIVAN, Esq.
F. R. S. AND F. A. S.

*Mala enim, et impia consuetudo est contra Deos disputandi, sive ex
animo id fit, sive simulate.*

CICERO.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

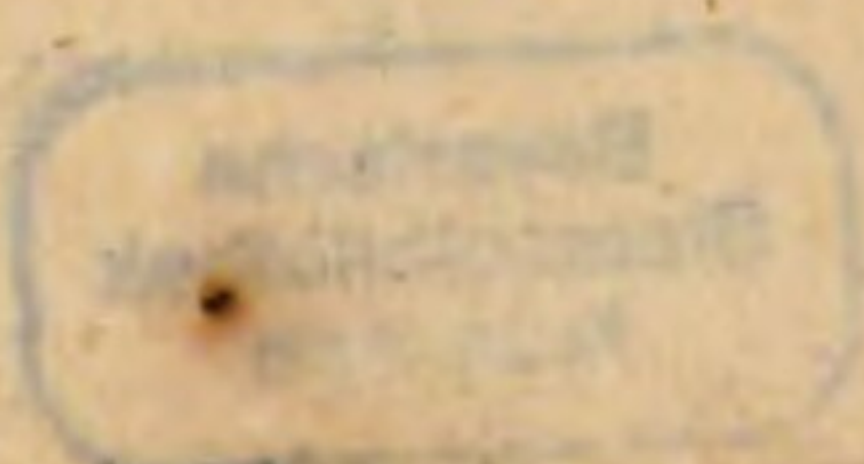
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686



Phys. 468 / 4

VIEW OF NATURE

IN THE

TO A TRAVELLER AMONG THE ALPS

WITH

THE

ATHEISTICAL PHILOSOPHY

BY

JOSEPH STANLEY

IN THE

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CONTENTS.

LETTER LXIII.

DIFFICULTY and importance of metaphysical inquiries---Of the soul---The known properties of matter not sufficient to account for the phænomena of mind ---these not explicable on the theory of organization---mind as well as body only known in its properties---the distinct existence of each equally capable of proof---the union of mind and matter inexplicable ---Various and contradictory opinions of the ancients concerning the soul---personal identity dependant on consciousness---The utility and importance of the doctrine of immortality---proofs, from the nature of the soul---from the general sense of mankind---how far this doctrine was received among the ancient Jews.

LETTER LXIV.

Analogical arguments for a future state---Moral arguments from the influence of the doctrine on the virtue and happiness of mankind---the folly and inhumanity of attempting to deprive men of this hope---our knowledge of the mode of future existence very imperfect —Doctrines of the ancients—pre-existence and trans-

migration---Difference between the souls of men and inferior animals.

LETTER LXV.

Of the existence of Deity---necessity of supposing a first cause---Mind the source of all motion and action---The phænomena of nature inexplicable without the supposition of Deity---Atheism the offspring of vanity and prejudice---Various opinions of the ancients---extravagance and absurdity of modern atheists---these not to be confounded with sober deists.

LETTER LXVI.

Universal agreement of mankind in the belief of a Deity ---this the effect of obvious traces of divinity in the established order of things---the universe not the work of chance, but of intelligence---The divine essence unknown, but agency manifest---futility of atheistical reasoning---Of time and eternity---The unity of the divine nature---folly of scepticism---arrogance and mischievous tendency of atheism---characters of goodness written on all nature.

LETTER LXVII.

The age of the world uncertain---Various changes in its surface by fire and water---The Atlantides a people who existed before the Mosaic deluge, and whose island is lost---The South sea islands the remains of an ancient continent---The most ancient fables founded on natural phænomena, or suppose a
 3 cultivated

cultivated state of society, prior to that of written records---Numerous proofs, natural and artificial, that the present surface of the earth has been covered with waters---The state of America no objection to this notion---high antiquity of Peru and Mexico---Marks of affinity between Europe and America.

LETTER LXVIII.

The Scythian monarchy the most ancient on historical record---the superior elevation of the country a strong argument for the superior antiquity of the people---the vast extent of its dominion---monuments still remaining in this country of an ancient civilized nation---its interior situation no objection---its elevation superior to that of any other part of the globe---historical accounts of the Scythian empire---astronomy probably first known here.

LETTER LXIX.

Historical memoirs concerning the antiquity and accuracy of Indian astronomy---derived from Scythia---The Sanskreet language of the Brahmans, not the primitive language of India, but transmitted from a more ancient people---The knowledge of the western world derived from the east---Bacchus, a Scythian conqueror, the Brahma of India---European superstitions of Asiatic origin---Pure and sublime notions of Deity among the ancient Indians---their superstitions symbolical---their early discoveries in the arts.

LETTER

LETTER LXX.

Asiatic sources of information concerning the origin of nations much more ancient than those of Greece and Rome---View of the ancient empires of Asia, Babylonia---Persia---China---Errors of the ancients concerning the Caspian sea---extent of the Scythian empire---Certain European names of places of Scythian derivation---Proofs of the ancient migration of Scythians into other parts of Asia and into Europe.

LETTER LXXI.

Different accounts of the origin of European nations---all either from the aboriginal stock of Celts, or from Scythia---The Teutonic nations, and the Goths, colonies from Scythia---The Scythians and Celts often improperly confounded---distinct characters of each.

LETTER LXXII.

Mental energy of the northern nations exemplified---Great revolutions have commonly originated from the north---irruption of the Goths---conquests of Timour---The Goths more civilized than is commonly supposed---review of the dissolution of the western Roman empire.

LETTER LXXIII.

The course of migration from north and east to south and west---Europe indebted to the east for its civilization---the northern parts of Asia the source of arts and letters---the history of letters involved in great

great obscurity---poetry antecedent to prose---its origin in the east---ancient methods of writing---alphabets---Greek and Latin tongues of Scythian origin.

LETTER LXXIV.

The Celtic languages radically different from the Gothic---the ancient Britons had letters, which they probably derived from the Phœnicians---The Britons in a considerable degree civilized before the Roman invasion---The Gauls and Britons originally Celtic, but underwent changes in language and customs, from emigration, colonization, and conquest.

LETTER LXXV.

Review of the character and doctrines of the Druids---these probably not from the east---character of the Celtic nations different from that of the Scythiac---The first inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland from the same stock---Miscellaneous observations on the ancient state of Britain.

great difficulty in getting acquainted to place in the
East in the East - special number of volume
Japan - Greek and Latin sources of
origin

LETTER IXXV

The Constantinian inscription is a copy from the Vatican
- the original is now in the hands of the
by the way, the inscription is the first in a
considerable degree of the Roman
- The Greek and Latin originally
- the inscription is in the
- the inscription is in the

LETTER IXXVI

Notice of the inscription and the edition of the
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LETTERS
TO A
TRAVELLER
AMONG THE ALPS.

LETTER LXIII.

THERE is an epidemic phrenzy, common to philosophers at all times, to doubt of what is, and to endeavour to explain what is not. This can arise only from an aim at singularity. We know from experience, that when the mind is biassed, the understanding is by no means neutral in the search of truth. Passion puts the judgment out of its due position, and creates illusion. Hence, fairness and candour, even in metaphysical pursuits, are often forsaken. It is not aimed at to discover impartially what the truth is, but what it is desired to be. We even in general are too little disposed to suspect our

own faculties, and thus impatient and presuming, hasten too frequently to erroneous conclusions. Placed, as it were, in an intellectual twilight, where we discover but few things clearly, and none entirely, we yet just see enough to tempt us to be rash.

In the course of our inquiries, we have necessarily been led to a consideration of the spiritual as well as the material part of the human frame. The subject, however, is highly worthy of still further investigation. What does not hang upon this single point ! Metaphysical researches are, indeed, a good deal out of date ; but they are not to be despised. They are the science of reason and intellect, as physics are those of sense and experiment. The abstract man, it is true, often plunges into darkness. But, if mounted on his imagination, and exploring those boundless regions, where there is no demonstrative ground to anchor evidence upon, and where all calculation is at fault, he should lose himself in the clouds, he is only to be considered as one impelled by an elevation of sentiment to an adventurous and glorious flight. The path I will readily acknowledge to be intricate and obscure ; but it leads to immateriality.

Epicurus

Epicurus insisted upon the permeability of matter. Among other arguments, he contended, that thunder or sound would not be able to pass through walls, nor fire to penetrate into iron, gold, and the other metals, unless there were some vacuous spaces in those bodies. Besides, “inasmuch as gravity is proper to bodies,” says he, “the weight of things could not be increased or diminished, if it were not from their being more or less porous.”* The followers of this philosopher outstripped their master. Absolute materiality, however, and motion, instead of spirit, was the doctrine of both. But, was death, indeed, before life? The question, Whence is the origin of motion, supposes that rest was the primitive state of matter, and that motion was produced by a subsequent act. But this supposition must surely be rejected, as it is giving precedence to the inferior, and inverting the order of nature. What life is to death, motion is to rest. Was death the first act of creation; and did life arise from death? Was death the immediate offspring of Deity, and life produced in a second generation? Or had death existence from eternity, and in time did life issue from its womb?† Des Cartes

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says,

* Lucretius.

† Young.

says, the soul always thinks, and that its essence consists in this actual exercise. Had he any irrefragable testimony of this? We cannot recollect what passed within us during the period of a profound sleep, nor while we were imprisoned in the loins of our mother.

Much has been said on the materiality of intelligence. But, all that can, with the utmost extravagance of imagination, be attributed to mind, is, that it is corporeal. This clearly does not affect the reality of its existence. Be it material or otherwise; be it composed or not composed of atoms; dependent or independent of the body; in whatever manner we consider it, there still exists in us something that thinks, and wills, or desires; and this something is what we call mind, or soul. We know not its internal nature; but, we plainly see its difference from the body, and that the one has nothing similar to the other. To call the soul material, is not more scientific than to call the body spiritual. If we be asked, whence arose the connection between soul and body, we can give no reply from the mere light of reason. We cannot explain what is inexplicable.

cable. We cannot comprehend things unintelligible.*

Sound philosophy does not preclude us from assigning a cause that can do more than produce the effect ; but it strictly prohibits us to assign one that cannot produce the effect. Mechanism has become a learned word. But, does it mean any more than that one particle of matter is impelled by another, as each resists a change of state, and that still by another, until we come to the particle first moved ? And the oftener the motion is thus communicated, the first impressed quantity of it necessarily becomes the less, if it be not kept up to the first height by an extraneous power. And how stupendous doth the multiplicity of the action of the first cause appear to be, in constantly maintaining the mechanism of our bodies ! If matter then cannot keep up mechanical motion in itself, can it rise to perfection infinitely excelling both in degree and kind ? Why are we to suppose all dead matter, and no living immaterial substance ? †

It was in former days the custom to take things on trust, and to believe without suf-

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ficient

* Buffier,

† Baxter.

ficient proof of any kind : but, now the fashion is, to believe nothing but what we see ; whence the most interesting truths are rejected. It is generally believed the moon has the power to raise the waters of the sea, because we see the effects ascribed to it in the tides ; and yet no one thinks the same planet has the like effect on the small quantity of fluid which circulates in the organized bodies of vegetables and animals ; and that for no other reason but because they cannot see it. If that planet has one decided influence, why should it not have a similar influence over all bodies ? The formation of men and animals long puzzled those world-makers, who would attribute every thing to material causes. At length a discovery was supposed to be made of primitive animalcula, of organic molecula, from whom every kind of animal was formed. It was found out, that nature one day teeming in the vigour of youth, produced the first animal ; a shapeless, clumsy, microscopical object. This, by the natural tendency of original propagation, to vary and protect the species, produced others better organized. These again produced others more perfect than themselves, till at last appeared the most complete species of animals, the human kind, beyond whose perfection it is impossible for the work
of

of generation to proceed. On the contrary, nature being arrived at this ultimate point of perfection, the whole animal race is degenerating; men into beasts, beasts into insects, insects into the primary animalcula, and so on. How long it will be before they arrive at the state from which they will doubtless set forward again, is not as yet quite determined.

Matter thinks, it is said, but not all matter indefinitely. In order for matter to think, it is necessary, they say, that it should be arranged in a particular manner, in the formation of organized bodies. But, either the primary elements, the atoms themselves, must think, or matter in any shape cannot be supposed capable of thought. Should an organized body have perception, the elements that compose it must also have perception. Those elements do not change their nature by their combination, nor will they do it by their decomposition. What is organization, but a particular arrangement of parts? And do simple unthinking elements become capable of thinking, in proportion as they are disposed in this or in that peculiar manner? This is as much as to say, an atom, which cannot think while it remains on the left hand of another, may be rendered capable of thinking by being

placed on the right. I can never conceive, that a capacity of thinking can be the effect of the combination and motion of unthinking elements.

It is vain to employ profound thought, and intense application, in attempting to explore the secrets of the invisible world. Philosophers, on this ground, are merely on a level with the rest of mankind. They may consume their reason in such deep but unsubstantial meditations; but, their minds must be eternally exposed to the illusions of fancy. A sober intellect, as it looks only at things as they lie before it, and neither considers nor cares whether causation be in one way or the other, may be a more competent judge of the reality of a fact, than the most subtle pyrrhonist, who, full of his own notions, and inflated with the opinion of his extraordinary researches, plunges through thick and thin, and never arrives at a certainty. Some, indeed, think they cannot in honour own any thing to be true, which they cannot demonstrate. To be taught any new points, is to confess former ignorance. But, in sober sadness, we should do well to commiserate our mutual poverty in knowledge. For where is the man who has incontestible evidence of the truth of
all

all that he holds, or of the falsehood of all he condemns? In this fleeting state of action and blindness in which we are placed, belief instead of proof must regulate us in general conclusions.

The search into mind and matter is, indeed, captivating and sublime. The more accurately we continue the pursuit, the stronger traces we every where shall find, of the wisdom and bounty of that Being who blended them together. "Thou art a poor spirit, carrying a dead carcase about thee," says Epictetus. But are souls in their nature different, or are they the same and unvaried in all men?—Sensibility, desires, passions, remembrance, recollection, wit, talents of every kind, even the most inferior qualities of the soul, are different in every individual. This mysterious truth is equally inexplicable to the learned and unlearned. It is a secret impenetrable to man, and known only to the Great Author of Nature. But, as we are able to guess at the diversity of souls, by the difference of animated bodies to which they are united, and by the different circumstances of individuals, why may not the possibility, and even the facility of a physical explanation of the diversities

sities of characters, passions, minds, induce us to conceive that souls are not essentially different from each other ; but that when once united to body, they instantly become liable to physical laws, and receive their character from organization ?

The phænomena of animal and vegetable bodies have always been considered as matters of inexhaustible praise to the Creator. But, is the use of the passions, which are the organs of the mind, barren of praise to him, or unproductive to ourselves of that noble and uncommon union of science and admiration, which a contemplation of the works of infinite wisdom alone can afford to a rational mind ? To the God of Nature we refer whatever we find of right, or good, or fair, in ourselves ; discovering his strength and wisdom, even in our own weakness and imperfection ; honouring them when we discover them clearly ; and adoring their profundity, where we are lost in the research. Is not this to be inquisitive without impertinence, and elevated without pride ? Is it not to be admitted, if I may dare say so, into the councils of the Almighty, by the consideration of his works ?*

Materialism,

* Burke.

Materialism, as I have repeatedly said, and I hope not unsatisfactorily proved, is repugnant to the sober sense of man. Yet who can pretend to demonstrate immateriality? We have no medium by which we can judge of the state and properties of material substances, but by the senses: in like manner, we have no other medium, whereby we can judge of the state and properties of the soul, than by an attention to its operations in ourselves, of which we have the consciousness. As our senses make no report of the inward constituent principles of matter, so our consciousness gives us no information, concerning the essence or state of our souls, independently of its operations: but, by observing its internal and external operations, and by comparing them together, we are able to attain some degree of important knowledge. Thus, whenever I seek external objects with my eyes, my fingers, or the organs of hearing, I not only discover the properties of these bodies, and judge of them accordingly; but, I judge there is a principle in me which takes cognizance of the external object, and that this principle is of a different nature from the object observed, and from the sense or instrument by which it is observed. Whenever I feel an agreeable or disagreeable sensation, I have a consciousness of the

the particular kind and degree of either, and I immediately judge that the sentient principle in me is different from the organ in which sensation is placed. Thus, when I write, walk, or speak, I know what I do, and I conclude that the operative principle is distinct from the instrumental and passive. Further, when I attend to the operation and desires of my mind, though they be excited by external objects, I perceive I can dwell on them, change them, send my thoughts abroad, recall them, &c. I am conscious my mind desires or shews things, which appear good or bad, true or false; but that these affections are made by a principle different from the brain and nerves, through whose medium these affections are excited.

As I have said above, however, no one who believes this comfortable tenet, can explain the incomprehensible union of mind and matter. But the union is not impossible; nor is a similar union inconsistent with a much higher, or even with the highest degree of mental faculties: nor does the incarnation of an *æon*, or archangel, the most perfect of created spirits, involve any contradiction or absurdity.* Materialism is, in short, untenable. And I say so,

* Gibbon.

so, not because it appears to me disastrous, and fraught with danger and mischief to society, but, because it is contrary to the clearest evidence of my senses.

But here arises another question, and of no little magnitude; Is there any necessary connection between the immateriality and the immortality of the soul? To prove this last, is it sufficient to shew that the soul, in quality of an indivisible substance, is incapable of decomposition? The death of a thinking being would appear to consist in the privation of ideas. We do not know that our minds had any ideas before we were born; neither can we say that they will, after we are corporeally deceased. One point is indeed clear to us, and that is, that in our present forms we are incapable of knowing with certainty whether the soul shall, after the dissolution of the body, remember its former state, or still continue to exercise its faculties?

The hope of immortality, as derived from reason, has been founded on the nature of the soul. This nature of the soul, indeed, has in all ages eluded the researches of philosophy. Among the ancients, what singular and contradictory

dictory opinions ! “ Plato, dixit animam essentiam se moventem ; Xenocratus, numerum se moventem ; Aristotelis, intellectum seu motum perpetuum ; Pythagoras et Philolaus, harmoniam ; Posidonius, ideam ; Asclepiades, quinque sensuum exercitium sibi consonum ; Hippocrates, spiritum tenuem per omne corpus diffusum ; Heraclitus Ponticus, lucem ; Heraclitus Physicus, scintillam stellaris essentiae ; Zenon, concretum corpori spiritum ; Democritus, spiritum insertum atomis ; Critolaus Peripateticus, constare eam de quinta essentia ; Hipparchus, ignem ; Anaximenes, aëra ; Empedocles et Critias, sanguinem ; Parmenides, ex terra et igne ; Xenophanes, ex terra et aqua ; Epicurus, speciem ex igne et aere et spiritu mistam.”* The *Bramins*, still earlier, looked upon the soul as an emanation of the spirit of God, breathed into mortals ; not as a portion, indeed, of the Divine Spirit. They compared it to the heat and light sent forth from the sun, which neither lessens nor divides its own immediate essence.

In the doctrines of the academy, we find that Platonists affirm, some souls to be of the nature of Saturn, others of Jupiter, and others of the nature of the other planets ; thereby meaning, that our soul has more conformity in its texture
with

* Macrobius.

with the soul of the heaven of Saturn, than with that of Jupiter ; and so on the contrary, of which no internal cause can be assigned. The external, say they, is God, who soweth and scattereth souls ; some in the moon, and others in the other planets and stars, the instruments of time. * And hence the imagination, that the rational soul descending from her star, in her *vehiculum cæleste*, forms of herself the body, to which by that medium she is united. Plato, upon these grounds, also supposes, that into the vehiculum of the soul, (by her endued with power to form the body) is infused, from her star, a particular formative virtue, distinct, according to that star ; and thus the aspect of one is saturnine ; of another, amorous ; and of a third, jovial, or fierce ; the looks, indicating the nature of the soul.

Epicurus, perceiving the number of sensual men to exceed by far that of the more spiritual, laid the foundation of his system in sensual pleasures, and held a corporeal soul, the better to fit it for those corporeal pleasures ; and then to secure this *anima* against those severe after-reckonings, the apprehension of which he perceived the God of Nature had implanted in the hearts of all men,

* Timæus.

men, he gave it a *quieta est*, by pretending that the soul is extinct in death, or at least is to vanish into an eternal insensibility, as unconcerned as if it had never been. This, indeed, was effectually to confine every thing to this life, and to stifle all idea of future retribution or punishment. For as it is evident, the human body is no one day together the same, that is, composed of the same particles, so it will follow, that if matter is supposed to think, there can be no personal identity, nor can a man continue to be the same individual being. “*Quanto absurdius, tanto melius.*” But, I can never reconcile this doctrine. When I look at one point, for instance, only, at pain and affliction, the result of mere matter and motion, the necessary consequence of a material physical system, imposed for no end, and whose issues are death present, and death eternal, this is such pure evil, such fruitless and absurd misery, as I cannot for a moment admit. If all dies with us, how can I embrace the doctrine of a general Providence, which yet certainly does exist?

“The whole man,” says Priestley, “becomes extinct at death. He is composed of one homogeneous substance; he is of one uniform composition: the ancients believed the same thing;

thing ; they believed the soul to be material and mortal." Some of them, we allow, did so. But, the assertion, by being indiscriminate, is erroneous. The ancients did not all suppose, that mere matter can think. Upon this hypothesis, man, as a thinking, intelligent being, consists only in the structure and organization of the brain and nervous system ; which being dissolved at death, the man becomes extinct, and as a thinking, intelligent being, has no existence. Dr. Priestley, indeed, attempts to remove the difficulties attending his hypothesis, by insisting upon the resurrection of the same man. But, is this a conceivable supposition, considering him only as material ?

Human beings exist in two different states of life and perception. When any of our senses are affected, or appetites gratified, we may be said to exist or live in a state of sensation. When none of our senses are affected, or appetites gratified, and yet we perceive, and reason, and act, we may be said to exist or live in a state of reflection. Now it is by no means certain, that any thing which is dissolved by death, is any way necessary to the living being in this its state of reflection, after ideas are gained. For though from our present constitution and condition of

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being, our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds, are in architecture ; yet, when these ideas are brought in, we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the greatest pleasure, and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses ; and without any at all that we know of, from that body, which will be dissolved by death. It does not appear then, that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being, is in any degree necessary to thinking, to our intellectual enjoyments and sufferings. Further, there are instances of mortal diseases not impairing our present reflecting powers. Persons, even the moment before death, appear to be in the highest vigour of life. They discover apprehension, memory, reason, all entire, with the utmost force of affection, sense of shame or honour, and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings even to the last gasp : and these surely prove even greater vigour of life, than bodily strength does. Now, what pretence is there for thinking, that a progressive disease, when arrived to such a degree, I mean that degree which is mortal, shall destroy those powers, which were not impaired, which were not affected by it, during its whole progress

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quite

quite up to that degree? Death may in some sort, and in some respects, answer our birth; it may put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does. *

What shall we say to that valiant leader, fighting for his country, who, borne on a litter, and spent with mortal disease, still fought the battle, in the midst of which he expired, and whose last effort was to place his finger on his lips, as a signal to conceal his death? In this dying hour, did not the muscles acquire a tone from undiminished spirit; and did not the mind seem to depart in its vigour, and in a struggle to obtain the recent aim of its toils? † Our organs of sense, and our limbs, are certainly instruments which living persons make use of, to perceive and move with. They are like a microscope to look through, or a staff to walk with. The eyes and the feet do not determine in these cases. In short, there is not any probability, that the alienation or dissolution of these instruments, is the destruction of the perceiving and moving agent.

Sometimes the infirmities of age affect the mind, destroy the memory, and wipe out all the

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sensible

* Bishop Butler.

† Ferguson.

sensible marks and characters of things ; but, this no more argues any decay of the soul, than the distraction of a fever, or the sealing up of our senses with sleep. Setting aside these accidents, the soul is continually improving itself. And can we think, when it has attained the greatest improvements and perfections it can in this body, it shall fall into nothing ? Does not our present condition rather look like a state of trial and probation for a more perfect life ? * Death in itself considered, is no argument against future existence. That we die, does no more prove that we shall not live after death, than the winter decays of nature are an argument against the return of the spring.

“ The power of sensation, perception, and thought, as belonging to man,” says Priestley, “ have never been found but in conjunction with a certain organized system ; and therefore, these powers necessarily exist in, and depend upon, such a system. Hence it is matter that is capable of thought and reflection.” That they exist in, and depend on such a system, are, however, very different conclusions. If they be always found in such a system, they certainly exist in it ; but, it does not follow, that they depend

* Sherlock.

depend upon it. Though communicated to a certain organization of matter, they may be derived from another cause. The fire, in substances thrown into fusion by the rays of the sun, exists for the time in those substances, but does not depend on them. And if I might be indulged a small alteration in the form of the argument, I think the following conclusion would be the more natural and obvious. I find no such thing as sensation, perception, and thought, in any modification of matter, except one; and those qualities being exceedingly different from the known properties of matter, I conclude that though found in such system, they are not derived from any particular organization of matter, but from some other cause. In attraction and repulsion, do we see any advancement made towards thought? Shall we suppose the magnet thinks, any more than the stone which paves the street? *

Locke asks, whether the same self continues the same identical substance? The ground of the doubt, whether the same person be the same substance, is said to be this—that the consciousness of our own existence, in youth and in old age, or in any two joint successive moments, is

B 3

not

* Shepherd.

not the same individual consciousness, but different successive consciousnesses. It is strange this should have occasioned such perplexities: for it is surely conceiveable, that a person may have a capacity of knowing an object to be the same now, which it was when he contemplated it formerly. And thus, though the successive consciousnesses which we have of our own existence, are not the same, yet they are of one and the same thing or object; of the same person, self, or living agent. * Some have carried this to an extraordinary length. Their notion is, that personality is not a permanent but a transient thing; that it lives and dies, begins and ends continually; that no one can any more remain one and the same person, two moments together, than two successive moments can be one and the same moment; that our substance is continually changing. But, even whether this be so or not, is, it seems, nothing to the purpose, since it is not substance, but consciousness alone, which constitutes personality; which consciousness being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently, the personality constituted by it. Whence it would follow, that it is a fallacy to charge our present selves with any thing we did, or to imagine our present selves
interested

* Bishop Butler.

interested in any thing which befel us, yesterday : or that our present selves will be interested in any thing which shall befall us to-morrow ; since our present selves are not in reality the same with the selves of yesterday, but other like selves, or persons, coming in their room and mistaken for them, to which other selves will succeed to-morrow. Some, indeed, concede so much as to allow, that the person is the same as far back as his remembrance reaches.

We have already lost, several times over, a great part, or perhaps the whole of our bodies, according to certain common established laws of nature ; yet we remain the same living agents. When we shall lose as great a part, or the whole, by another common established law of nature, death, why may we not also remain the same ? That the alteration has been gradual in one case, and in the other prompt, does not prove any thing to the contrary : we have passed undestroyed through these many and great revolutions of matter, so peculiarly appropriated to us. Why should we then imagine death will be so fatal ? The dissolution of matter is clearly not the destruction of the living agent. But, all imagination of a daily change of that living agent, which each man calls himself, or of any

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such

such change throughout our whole present life, is entirely borne down by our natural sense of things. Nor is it possible for a person in his senses to alter his conduct, with regard to his health or affairs, from a suspicion, that though he should live to-morrow, he should not be, to-morrow, the same person he is to-day. The inexpressible absurdity of this notion every one must feel. *

But, although we are thus certain we are the same agents, living beings, or substances, now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches; yet, it is asked whether we may not possibly be deceived in this? The same question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever, because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt, whether perception by memory can in this be depended on, may doubt also, whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also include memory, or indeed, whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no farther; for it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove, than by other perceptions of exactly the same kind with them,

* Bishop Butler.

them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect ; or to attempt to establish the credit of our faculties, by means of those very suspected faculties themselves.

Credibile quia impossibile, is not in the disposition of all men. The opinion of the mortality of the thinking part of man, is thought by some to be unfavourable to morality and religion ; but without the least reason, says Priestley, for the common opinion of the soul of man surviving the body, was introduced into Christianity from the Oriental and Greek philosophy ; it was discarded by Luther, and many other reformers in England and abroad. Can it be supposed, the Apostles, the primitive Fathers, and modern reformers, should all adopt an opinion unfavourable to morality ? Their opinion unquestionably was, that whatever be the nature of the soul, its percipient and thinking powers cease at death. Even concerning the soul, we find nothing said by any Christian writer before Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, and who using their language, speaks of souls, as emanations from the Deity.—But, in this point our learned author is in an error, for Polycarp, Clemens, and Ignatius, are more ancient writers than Justin ; the two latter being contemporary with the Apostles, Peter and

Paul; and the former with the Apostle John; and they all mention the soul, nay, they mention it in such a manner, as totally overthrows our author's doctrine. Thus, they speak of the place and state of the souls of the righteous after death: "Paul, and the rest of the Apostles," says Polycarp, "are in the place appointed for them, *παρὰ τῷ Κυρίῳ*, with the Lord." *

"Many men, persuaded of the utility of the dogma of another life," says Mirabaud, "look upon those who dare combat it as the enemies of society. Nevertheless, it is easy to prove, that the most enlightened and the wisest sages of antiquity, not only believed the soul was mortal and perished with the body, but have even attacked the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. We see it adopted by the philosophers of all sects; the Pythagoreans, the Epicureans, the Stoics—in a word, by all the most holy and most virtuous of the Greeks and Romans. Recollect what Ovid makes Pythagoras say:

"O genus attonitum gelidæ formidine mortis,
Quid stygia, quid tenebras, & nomina vana timetis,
Materiem vatum, falsique piacula mundi?"

The

* Materialism Examined.

The Pythagorean sect acknowledged the doctrine of rewards and punishments was fabulous; purely intended for the weak vulgar, and little made for those who cultivate their reason. Aristotle declared formally, man has no good to hope, nor any evil to dread after death. In the system of the Platonists, who would have the soul immortal, there could not have been punishments to be apprehended, because the soul was to return to the Divinity, of whom it was a portion: the Divinity could not be subject to coercion. “Zeno,” says Cicero, “supposed the soul to be a fiery substance; whence he concluded it might be destroyed.” “*Zenoni Stoico animus ignis videtur. Si sit ignis, extinguetur; interibit cum reliquo corpore.*” Cicero himself, who was an Academician, did not always hold the language of immaterialism. In several parts of his works, he has treated the torments of hell as fables, and looked upon death as the end of every thing relative to man. Seneca is full of passages, in which he shews that death is annihilation; “*Mors est, non esse. Id quale sit, jam scis; hoc erit post me, quod ante me fuit. Si quid in hac re tormenti est, necesse est & fuisse antequam prodiremus in lucem; atque nullam sensimus tunc vexationem*”. In speaking of the death of his brother, he says, “*Quid itaque*
ejus

ejus desiderio maceror, qui aut beatus, aut nullus est?" In fine, the following passage gives decidedly his sentiments: "Si animus fortuita contempsit; si Deorum hominumque formidinem ejecit, & scit non multum ab homine timendum, à Deo nihil; si contemptor omnium quibus torquetur vita, eo perductus est, ut illi liqueat mortem nullius mali esse materiam, multorum finem." Epictetus has the same idea as remarked by Arrian. "But, where go you?" says he, "not to a place of suffering. You do nothing more than return from whence you came. You go quietly to be associated with the elements whence you sprang. That which in your composition is of the nature of fire, will return to fire; that which is of earth, to earth; that which is of water, to water; that which is of air, to air. There is neither a Hell, an Acheron, a Cocytus, nor a Phlegethon." The sage and pious Antoninus says, "One must await death with tranquillity, seeing it is nothing but the decomposition of the elements of which one is composed." To these evidences from Pagan antiquity, one may also add the author of Ecclesiastes, who speaks of death, and of the lot of man, like an Epicurean. "For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have
have

have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity." To conclude, how is it possible, we are asked, for Christians to reconcile the utility or the necessity of the dogma of a future life, with the profound silence of the inspired legislator of the Jews, on an article so highly important?*

It is certainly incomprehensible, as I have often said, how the operations of spiritual beings can be performed. It is not to be conceived, how men can be competent to see, when their eyes are gone; or to grieve, rejoice, and think, when the brain, the medium of thinking, is turned into dirt. Neither can we figure to ourselves, in what manner departed souls can have a knowledge of particulars, which, in general, are supposed to be only discernible to us by bodily senses. Futurity is an abyss invisible to the most eagle-eyed, the most piercing sagacity. But is it not presumptuous to reduce all to the narrow measure of our own capacities; and to conclude certain things impossible to be done, whose manner of doing exceeds our comprehensions? This is to make our comprehension infinite, or God finite.† To believe a future state, is not to believe a vulgar error. It is not indeed to be demonstrated;

* Syst. de la Nat.

† Locke.

monstrated ; and no one ever returned that irremediable way, to give us an assurance of the fact. But, the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments, have been insisted upon by the wisest philosophers, and sanctified by Heaven itself, in our own Christian dispensation.

What is the life of man ? Is it any thing more than a circulation of little actions ? We lie down and rise again ; and dress and undress ; feed and wax hungry ; work or play, and are weary ; and then we lie down again, and the circle returns. We spend the day in trifles ; and when the night comes, we throw ourselves into the bed of repose, among dreams and broken thoughts, and wild imaginations. Our reason lies asleep with us, and we are, for the time, as the animals that sleep in the field. But, are not the capacities of men higher than those of the brutes ? And ought not his ambition and his expectations to be greater ? Let us be adventurous then for another world : it is at least a fair and a noble chance ; and there is little in this worth our thoughts or our passions. If we should be disappointed, we shall be still no worse than the rest of our fellow-mortals ; and if we succeed in our expectations, we shall be eternally happy.*

Man,

* Burnet.

Man, feeling within himself a concealed power, which directed and produced, in an invisible manner, the movements of his frame, believed that nature, of whose motions and energy he was ignorant, owed her motions to an agent analogous to his soul. Looking upon himself as double, he likewise made her double. That agent, he regarded as the soul of the world; and the souls of men, as emanations from it. This opinion of the origin of souls is of vast antiquity. It was that of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Hebrews. Even Moses seems to hint at the idea: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a *living soul*." But, in all this, it is said, there is little reason or philosophy, though there is, indeed, much profound and interested clerical policy. It was necessary to find out means to perpetuate a portion of man at his dissolution, to the end he might be rendered more susceptible of rewards and punishments; whence priests could intimidate, govern, and pillage the ignorant, and distract even the more enlightened, who, like the ignorant, could understand nothing of what was said to them of the soul, or of a Providence. But, is not this miserably to beg the question? All things are alike easy to be done by God. It is not,

not, therefore, a right distinction, to define or distinguish any thing supernatural, by any absolute difficulty in the nature of the thing; as if the things we call natural, were absolutely, and in their own nature, easier to be effected, than those we look upon as supernatural. On the contrary, it is evident and undeniable, that it is at least as great an act of power to cause the sun and planets to move, as to cause the soul to exist in futurity. Yet this latter is called a miraculous interposition; the former not. And to restore the dead to life, is, in itself, plainly altogether as easy, as to dispose matter at first into such order, as to form a human body, in that which we call a natural way. So that absolutely speaking, in this strict and philosophical sense, either nothing is miraculous, namely, if we have respect to the power of God; or if we regard our own power and understanding, then almost every thing, as well what we call natural, as what we call supernatural, is in this sense really miraculous; and it is only usualness, or unusualness, that makes the distinction.*

Material substances multiply; spiritual do not: consequently, we may look with confidence to the immortality of the soul. For, as it is not material,

* Clarke.

material, it follows it is not formed of parts. That which has not parts, cannot be separated into parts; that which cannot be separated into parts, cannot be dissolved; and that which is incapable of dissolution, must be incorruptible and immortal.—Accurately speaking, the material part of us is not annihilated at death. The different elements of which it was composed, remain in their integral state. Is it conformable to sound reason, then, to suppose the soul in a more limited condition than the body; that the immaterial substance perishes, but that the material elements remain? Philosophy of old was intended to instruct mankind; the philosophy of the present day tends to sap every foundation of sense and understanding. Philosophy of old wished to lead us to immortality; the philosophy of the present day, to positive annihilation. Is not the inverted ambition of that man beyond imagination, who can hope for destruction, and please himself to think his whole frame shall one day crumble into dust, and mix with the common mass of inanimate, unintelligent substances? How sordid the hope, that he shall not be immortal, because he does not endeavour to be so! How wretched the substitution of a dark negative happiness, in the extinction of his being!*

No man ever wished to be totally extinguished in death, who had any concern about posthumous events. No man ever died in the cause of virtue and liberty, for the sake of truth, in defence of his country, or on account of posterity, who had not immortality in some sense or other before his eyes. “*Nemo unquam sine magno spe immortalitatis se pro patria offerret ad mortem.*”* Read ancient history, consider the present times, look into the works of the learned, fix your eyes on all the greatest examples, on every the most conspicuous person, you will find all full of this spirit, and all arising from this original desire. Into how many thousand different forms of action does it not shoot! Consider how many different ways men have taken to preserve their memory when gone. Every one who has power, or genius, falls on some plan or other, to inform posterity that such a person once existed. “*Et quatenus nobis denegatur diu vivere, relinquamus aliquid, quo nos vixisse testemur.*”† Men survive themselves in brass and marble, in books, buildings, monuments, pictures, pillars, inscriptions, &c. Even those very persons who boast the happiness of being utterly cut off, shew themselves equally industrious with others. The atheist is thus formed in opposition to his own principles: he burns with a desire of everlasting
praise,

* Cicero,

† Pliny.

praise, as well as of present admiration : he writes, disputes, propagates his doctrine ; he cannot divest himself of the desire of existence. He, in a word, strives to build an immortal fame, on a material system, on a system of positive annihilation.*

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, it is said, is not coeval with man. Whole nations have come down into the regions of true history, without having placed a tenet, so essential to religion, in their creed. Mankind in their rudest state, say they, scarce ever extend their ideas beyond the objects of sense. They perceive when death suspends the functions of the body, that the man ceases to act and to feel ; and the subsequent dissolution of his whole frame establishes the supposition, that his being is at an end. Nature herself confirms the opinion, from every quarter, by symptoms of decay. The oak that has fallen by accident or age, resumes not its place on the mountain ; and the flower that withers in autumn does not revive with the returning year. Philosophy only begins, where the first stage of society ends. As long as bodily labour is the only means of acquiring the necessities of life, man has neither time, nor inclination to cultivate the mind. Specula-

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tive

* Matho.

tive enquiry is the first fruits of the leisure which civil life procures for individuals ; but it is extremely doubtful, whether the immortality of the soul is among the first truths, which philosophers have rescued from ignorance and barbarity. The most polished nation of antiquity was late in its reception of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The Greeks, till the days of Thales, had formed no idea at all concerning a future state. “Thales primus dixit animas esse immortales.” It is even likely that Thales himself came too early into the world, for the commencement of that opinion. Pherecydes of Scyros, according to the best authority, first introduced the doctrine, about the 55th olympiad; and his disciple, Pythagoras, greatly contributed to confirm the belief of another state, by the reputation of his philosophy.* “Pherecydes Scyrius primus dixit animos hominum esse sempiternos.” And again, “hanc opinionem Pythagoras ejus (scilicet Pherecydes) discipulus maximé confirmavit.”† It is certain, however, that few of the Greeks adopted the opinion of Pythagoras and his master; for Pausanias insinuates, that even in the days of Plato only some of the Greeks believed the soul of man to be immortal. ‡

That

* Macpherson.

† Cicero.

‡ Macpherson.

That there have been nations in ignorance, and that there have in all ages been atheists and infidels, is beyond dispute. Were not this the case, there would have been no need now, nor at any other time, to prove the soul immortal. The immortality of the soul has in general been believed, from the earliest period we can trace, “*et primum quidem omni antiquitate,**” and in all places; by the unlearned part of all civilized people; and by the almost general consent of all the most barbarous nations under heaven; from a tradition so ancient and so universal, that it cannot be conceived to owe its original either to chance, or to vain imagination, or to any other cause, than to the Author of Nature himself. And the most learned and thinking part of mankind, at all times and in all countries, where the study of philosophy has been in any measure cultivated, have almost generally agreed, that it is capable of a just proof, from the abstract consideration of the nature and operations of the soul itself. “I cannot imagine,” says Cyrus, in that speech which, according to Xenophon, he made to his children a little before his death, “I cannot imagine the soul, while it is in this mortal body, lives; and that when it is separated from it, it dies. I cannot persuade myself, that

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* Cicero.

the soul, by being separated from this body, which is devoid of sense, should therefore become likewise itself devoid of sense: on the contrary, it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the mind is separated from the body, it should then become most of all sensible and intelligent. “Although the whole herd of vulgar philosophers,” says Cicero, (for this appellation belongs to all those who dissent from Plato and Socrates, and the rest of that school) “were to unite their powers, they would never be able to explain any subject with so much elegance, or even fully to comprehend the force and beauty of this argument.” “*Licet concurrant plebei omnes philosophi (sic enim ii qui a Platone et Socrate et ab illa familia dissident, appellandi videntur :) non modo nihil unquam tam eleganter explicabunt, sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum sit intelligent.*” * “No man shall drive me from the hope of immortality,” says he in another place, “and if this my opinion concerning the immortality of the soul, should at last prove an error, yet it is a delightful error, and I will never suffer myself to be deceived in so pleasing an opinion, as long as I live.” “These things are nothing either in number or greatness,” says Plato, “in comparison

* Tusc, Quest.

parison with those rewards of virtue, and punishments of vice, which attend men after death.”*

Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἑδὲν ἐς πληθεὶ ἑδε μεγεθεὶ πρὸς ἐκεῖνα
ὥτε κοιτησάντα ἐκαστον περιμένει.

The mysteries of the ancients had all one end and one nature, to teach the doctrine of a future state. In this Origen and Celsus agree, the two most learned writers of their several parties. The first, stating to his adversary the difference between the future life promised by the gospel, and that taught in Paganism, bids him compare the Christian doctrine with what all the sects of philosophy, and all the mysteries among Greeks and barbarians taught concerning it: and Celsus, in his turn, endeavouring to shew that Christianity had no advantage over Paganism in the strength of its sanctions, expresses himself thus: “But, now after all, just as you believe eternal punishments, so do the ministers of the sacred rites, and those who initiate into and preside in the mysteries.” The ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΑ, or hidden doctrines of the mysteries, were the unity of the Divine Nature, and the error of the grosser polytheism, namely, the worship of dead men deified. The Hebrew people alone had a public and national worship of one true God. †

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* De Repub.

† Divine Legation.

The ancients distinguished the souls of men into three species; the human, the heroic, and the demonic. The two last, when they left the body, were believed to enjoy eternal happiness for their public services on earth, not in Elysium, but in Heaven, where they became a kind of Demi-Gods. But, all of the first, which included the great body of mankind, were understood to have their designation in Purgatory, Tartarus, or Elysium; the first and last of which abodes were temporary, and only the second eternal. Those who had greatly served their country, were, according to Tully, supposed to have souls of the heroic or demonic kind. The hope of unbounded felicity leads to virtue; and the dread of future punishment must have a still stronger influence on the conduct. The religion of the ancients did not tend merely to flatter the senses; it employed the most proper means to deter from wickedness. It alarmed them on all sides with the most frightful representations. The testimony of those of antiquity, who opposed what they were pleased to call weak and foolish prejudices; their very attempt to dissipate those prejudices, or to turn them into ridicule, shews how deeply they were rooted. Observe with what solicitude Lucretius every where endeavours to burst the bonds of religion, and to fortify

tify his readers against the threatenings of eternal punishment.

Nations, indeed, whose pursuits or faculties are but little superior to those of the brute creation, who are influenced merely by the impulse of sense, cannot be supposed to form any other ideas of the happiness of a future state, than such as result from sensual gratification. This is illustrated by the opinions of the American Indians, and of the inhabitants lately discovered in the islands in the South Seas, as well as the uncultivated tribes of antiquity. The belief of a future state of happiness is universal; but, not so decidedly that of a future state of punishment. Even the most barbarous nations have their heaven; but many have no idea of hell. Savages, who have no settled abode, and who live independent of every connection, except what is prompted by the mere instincts of nature, can have very little idea of moral obligation; and not being attached to any civil community, they never think of assigning a place of torment for the punishment of crimes committed against it. But, wherever we discover the rudiments of civil society, we find the belief of a state of future punishment has been introduced, which becomes more generally understood, in proportion

as the knowledge of moral and civil duty is extended and established. The cacodæmons, furies, *mali genii*, &c. of the ancients, were but the Christian notion of a Devil ; and Pluto, the god of hell, and governor of infernal spirits, is nearly the same with the scriptural Satan, the prince of darkness.*

In the infancy of philosophy, it is difficult for the human mind to form any distinct idea of the existence of an immaterial being. The northern nations, without being acquainted with the *Palin-genesia*, (Pythagoras *non μετεμψύχωνσιν sed παλιν-γενεσιαν esse dicit, hoc est redire, sed post tempus,*) cloathed their departed spirits with bodies not subject to decay ; and they were singular in the opinion, that the soul left all unhappiness behind it, when it took its flight from this world. This pleasing prospect, which a future state presented to our ancestors, rendered, by its contrast, the present life very miserable in their eyes. They wept over the birth of their children, as entering into a scene of misfortunes ; and they accompanied their dead with joy to the grave, as having changed a state of unhappiness for one of perfect felicity. “ Peculiarly fortunate, perhaps, in their error”, says an elegant writer,

* Dr. Nicholson.

writer, if the opinion deserves so harsh a name, they converted into means of joy what other systems of religion have rendered sad and melancholy : and thus they became independent of fortune in her worst extreme.*

The popular doctrine of a Providence, and consequently of a future state of rewards and punishments, was so universally received in the ancient world, that we cannot find any civilized country, where it was not a part of the national belief. The most ancient Greek poets, as Musæus, Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, &c. who have given systems of mythology and religion, on the popular creed of such nations, always reckon the doctrine of a future state as a fundamental article : and all succeeding writers have borne testimony to the same belief. In the works of every ancient historian and philosopher, this is manifest. But, Plutarch, as one of the best acquainted, shall speak for the rest. “Examine the face of the globe, and you may find cities unfortified, unlettered, without a regular magistrate, or appropriated habitation ; without possessions, property, or the use of money ; and unskilled in all the magnificent and polite arts of life : but, a city without a God, or the practice of religion ;
without

* Macpherson.

without the use of vows, oaths, oracles, and sacrifices to procure good ; or of deprecatory rites to avert evil, no man can, or ever will find." No wise or learned people, at these periods, but looked upon the believing and teaching the doctrine of a future state to be of use to civil society. They founded their several systems on it, convinced of the truth, that no religion could be sustained without it.*

Moses, indeed, although he seems to have understood that the soul was a portion of the Divinity, does not any where formally establish the dogma of the immortality of the soul. This has led to the supposition, that it was during the Babylonish captivity the Jews acquired the idea of future rewards and punishments, as taught by Zoroaster to the Persians ; otherwise, why should Moses have kept his people in ignorance of it ? And hence it has been asserted, that our European religions have greatly been infected by Platonic reveries, which are nothing more than obscure notions, and unintelligible metaphysics, gleaned from Chaldean, Assyrian, and Egyptian priests. For in fact, it is asked, if philosophy consists in a knowledge of nature, can we in any manner allow the philosophy of Plato
to

• Divine Legation.

to merit that name, which does nothing but lead the mind astray from the visible to the intellectual world, where nothing is found but chimeras, spirits, intelligences, incorporeal substances, invisible powers, angels, devils, mysterious virtues, supernatural effects, divine illuminations, innate ideas ?*

That the Jews were not all ignorant of the doctrine of a future state, is clear and evident. How else are we to understand what they tell us of Job ? “ For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.” The only objection I know against the expounding these words of Job to denote the true and proper resurrection of the body, after its death and dissolution, is the general persuasion, that the doctrine of the resurrection was not then known to the world.† The Sadducees, it is true, believed the extinction of the soul at death. Hence, likewise, the modern revival of this opinion, though maintained under the softer name of its sleep,

* Syst. de la Nat.

† Sherlock.

sleep, between death and the resurrection : for it proceeds upon the Sadducean principle, that the soul is a quality only, and not a substance, and that it dies with its substratum. But, this sleep of the soul, taken as a quality, is unphilosophical. Sleep is a modification of existence, not of non-existence ; so that though the sleep of a substance have meaning, the sleep of a quality can have no meaning. And if ever this soul re-exerts its faculties, it must be by means of a re-production, not by a mere waking. In a word, neither believers nor unbelievers can allow, that a newly existing soul, which is only a quality resulting from a glorified body, can be identically the same with an annihilated soul, which had resulted from an earthy body.*

The instance, however, I have given, from that most ancient and most sublime book of Job, is sufficient to prove, that there then existed a lively belief in a future state. Could Moses be ignorant of the immortality of the soul, and yet hand us down such expressive words of a certain resurrection ? Arnaud and Warburton, I know, have proved that Moses did not enforce the doctrine of future rewards and punishments to the Jews. But, though this might not have come within

* Warburton.

within his scheme of political rule over the Israelites, yet it does not prove the dogma did not exist. The Sadducees, who, as I have said, subsequently denied the principle, were not of the ancient tribes. Sadoc and Antigonus were the authors of the sect, about two centuries only before the birth of Christ; and from Sadoc they took their name.* The Mosaic dispensation is, indeed, on this account, severely handled by its enemies. Such ignorance being apportioned to the Jews, is said to be a disgrace to Revelation; as by the very act of God himself it shut out his own chosen people for many ages, from that single point of knowledge, which could alone be the foundation of a reasonable worship, and of which benefit, by the permission of his providence, all the world besides were to partake.

But, the Mosaic religion was a republication merely of natural religion to the Jews; and all it taught concerning its sanctions was, that God is, and that he is a rewarder and punisher in this our present existence. The reasons why a future state is omitted, is apparent: Moses assured the Israelites they were under the dispensation of an extraordinary Providence. “And now let me ask,” says Warburton, “how it comes to pass that

* Lettres de quelques Juifs.

that the self same system of religion, which one way (by the light of reason) revealed to man, does honour to God, if we believe St. Paul; yet another way revealed (by Moses) dishonours him? If the Mosaic religion, which omitted a future state, is unworthy of God, it follows, that natural religion, which taught no future state, was equally unworthy of him. They both wanted, I will acknowledge, much of what the Christian possesses.*

It is well known that Pythagoras divided his disciples into two classes; the one called *Esoteric*, the other *Exoteric*. The first he instructed in the more perfect and sublime doctrines; the latter in the more vulgar and popular.† Might not Moses, or those appointed under him, have found it prudent in their critical and most uncommon situation, to have pursued a similar line of conduct? However this may be, the doctrine of a future state, I must, from every consideration, suppose to have been prior even to the writing of any of the books of Moses. Had a discovery of so great importance been made to mankind, after the time of Moses, or indeed after the flood, and before the Babylonish captivity, we should certainly

* Divine Legation.

† Origen.

tainly have had some account of it in the Old Testament ; it being of infinitely more moment than any thing recorded there. Even that which our Saviour has done, has only been a republication of this doctrine, with, indeed, strong and additional evidence.

It is however said, that Christ and his apostles, in compliance with the prevailing opinions of the times, taught a doctrine which they did not believe, the immortality of the soul. In all the New Testament, say they, there is no argument for a future state, from the existence of the soul as a principle in the human constitution naturally distinct from, and independent of the body.* In this I agree, that throughout the New Testament, we find no express declaration of the exclusive immortality of the soul ; for the design of Christ's mission was not to repeat truths, at that time universally known and asserted, but to bring to light the resurrection of the body in conjunction with the soul.† The same, though tending to a different purpose, may be said of Moses. He, though he studiously omitted the doctrine of a future state, was yet well apprised of its importance, and purposely brought into his institution, as probably

VOL. IV.

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* Priestley.

† Shepherd.

more efficacious at the moment, the punishment of children for the sins of their fathers.

The universal consent thus of mankind in the belief of the immortality of the soul, is nothing less than the voice and sense of nature. For it is unaccountable, how all mankind should agree in this belief, unless the same nature, which is common to them all, should have taught it them all. It is certain that all mankind, all the nations of the world, never met together in a general council to settle the point, whether the soul be immortal or not; and therefore, this belief is not matter of compact and association. But, if it had been so, it would have been a very venerable authority, unless we can think, that all mankind could league to cheat themselves and all their posterity with such false and groundless hopes. It evidently has been a traditional doctrine from the beginning of the world. It must have come to the first of the human race from nature or from revelation; for the first could not have it from tradition. If neither nature taught it, nor God revealed it, how came our first parents to instruct their posterity in it, and that with such care, that the tradition should have never been lost? Unless by nature or revelation, it is impossible to imagine, how it should have been so universally preserved

preserved in all the dispersions of mankind, through so many successive generations. There is no doubt that many thousand traditions, since the beginning of the world, have been utterly lost ; and had not nature secured this tradition, would it not have been lost among the rest ?*

The harmony of opinion, says a learned writer, in regard to a future state, must be either that the doctrine, like that of the existence of the Deity, must have been *innate* in the mind, impressed on it by its great author, or derived from primæval tradition. For it otherwise surpasses all the strength of credulity, to believe that the legislators of every nation under heaven, should severally have hit upon the same expedient. On this ground, therefore, a man might safely place his foot. But, on so elevated a subject, though we may be accused of abstruse reasonings, and metaphysical subtilties, we have yet stronger holds than even these.

* Sherlock.

LETTER LXIV.

PHILOSOPHICAL vanity often contracts the human faculty, and immerses the soul in matter, until it is unable to mount on the wing of contemplation. But, it is the genius of rising intelligence, to spurn the fellowship of inferior natures, to assert its affinity with those of an higher order, and to sigh for an intercourse and society more congenial and elevated. Death, says the materialist, is the final period of our being. But, superstition denies this; she stretches out life beyond life itself. Her fears extend further than our existence. She has joined to the idea of death, another inconsistent idea, of eternal life in misery. For when all things come to an end, then, in the opinion of superstition, they begin to be endless. Then, I cannot tell what dark and dismal gates of Tartarus fly open; then rivers of fire, with all the fountains of Styx, are broken up. Thus doth dreadful superstition oppose the voice of God, which hath declared death to be the end of sufferings.*

In

* Plutarch.

In reply, I exclaim with the old philosopher, *Video barbam et pallium, philosophum nondum video.* Without a future state, all comes to nothing. If this doctrine be once abandoned, there is no justice, no goodness, no order, no reason, nor any thing upon which any argument in moral matters can be founded. Nay, even though we should set aside all consideration of the moral attributes of God, and consider only his natural perfections, his infinite knowledge and wisdom, as framer and builder of the world; it would even, in that view, appear infinitely improbable, that God should have created such beings as men are, and endued them with such excellent faculties, and placed them on this globe of earth; and all this without any further design, than only for maintaining a perpetual succession of such short-lived mortals as we at present are, to live in the utmost confusion and disorder for a very few years, and then fall eternally into nothing. What can be imagined more vain and empty? What more absurd? What more void of all marks of wisdom, than the fabric of the world, and the creation of mankind, upon such a supposition?*

No substance, or being, can have a natural tendency to annihilation, or to become nothing.

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From

* Clarke.

From a change of accidents of the same substance, we erroneously argue a change of the substance itself; though a change of substance is improperly called a change: and hence we falsely imagine, that immaterial substances, or beings, may have a natural tendency to decay, or become nothing.* Nothing, is that which has no properties or modes whatever; that is to say, it is that of which nothing can truly be affirmed, and of which every thing can truly be denied. Now, eternity and infinity, for example, are only modes or attributes, which exist merely by the existence of the substance to which they belong. He that can suppose eternity and immensity, and consequently, the substance by whose existence these modes or attributes exist, removed out of the universe; may, if he pleases, as easily remove the relation of equality between twice two and four.†

Locke determined with his usual sagacity, when he made personal identity to consist in consciousness. When the dead rise, the question is not so much, with what body do they come? St. Paul calls the proposer of that question a fool; but, he would not have bestowed that epithet on the man who should ask,
With

* Baxter. † Clarke.

With what mind do they come? The mind is the man; and it informs us we shall never die. From analogy, it surely seems probable we may survive the change occasioned by death, and exist in a future state of life and perception. The difference of the capacities and states of life at birth and in maturity; the change of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their loco-motive powers, by such a change; birds and insects bursting the shell, their habitation, and by this means entering into a new world, furnished with new accommodations for them, and finding a new sphere of action assigned them; all these wonderful transformations afford analogical presumptions in favour of a future state. But, the condition of life in which we ourselves existed formerly, in the womb, and in our infancy, are almost as different from our present state in maturity of age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life to be. That we are to exist hereafter, therefore, in a state as different from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature; according to a natural order, or appointment, of the very same kind with what we have already experienced. The whole natural world, and government of it, is a scheme or system; not a

fixed, but a *progressive* one. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this; and so is human life. Thus vegetable bodies, and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And those rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form each his own character and manners, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Thus, as our existence is successive, so may our present state of life and being be appointed by God as a preparation for another.*

“As we are brought out of nothing,” says Tertullian, “why should we not be raised from nothing to immortality?” But, it is urged, that when the body dies, every thing else dies with it; that as before we were born we were nothing, so after our death we shall be nothing. Let us adopt this analogy. But, if I take my point of comparison from the moment when I was nothing, and when I came into existence, what becomes of this argument? One positive proof is infinitely more convincing than all the negative proofs in the world. From an unknown past,
a future

* Butler.

a future unknown is inferred ; and thus the mortality of man is established. I, on the contrary, however, would draw my consequences from the present, which I do know, for that to come, which I do not know ; and thus assure myself of a future existence. When we consider the soul in the foetus, before the birth, that it is a living spirit, capable of thought, consciousness, and reflection, and yet at that time has none of these, nor perhaps, any perception ; when we consider, that in sleep, we retain very little sensation or perception ; that in swooning, convulsions, and lethargies, though the soul still remains in the body, yet all perception is lost, and we are in a manner inanimate ; when we consider all these things, is it at all irrational, or inconsistent with eternal existence, to suppose we may be in a dormant state, as we probably have been, from the creation until our birth ? Where is the incompatibility with true philosophy, to say, that life and immortality hereafter should be the gift of God, as that our first being and life have been from his goodness ?

That this corporeal frame which is hourly mouldering away, and resolved at last into the undistinguished mass of elements from which it was at first derived, should ever be “ clothed
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with immortality ; that this corruptible should put on incorruption," is a truth, indeed, far removed from the apprehension of philosophical research.* Nor do I hesitate to acknowledge that faith, with respect to the immortality of the soul, gives us much more positive assurances, than human reason is capable of suggesting. But, as the soul has a principle of formation, of which we are entirely ignorant, may it not have a principle of future existence of which we are ignorant ? And is there not a necessity that every man who would wish to act well, should propose to himself some scope or end ? To have an end, is indeed not so much a moral duty, which supposes a liberty of acting, as a natural principle, like that of the descent of heavy bodies. It is impossible that men should do otherwise. The principle of self-preservation, implies this acting for an end, in all rational agents. Even the most profligate wretches do the same. There are too many in the world, indeed, who seem to live *extempore*, without any reference to a chief end, being immersed only in present matters, "*animalia sine præterito & futuro*," without any regard to what is passed or future : but, these rather wander, than travel.

But

* Bishop Watson.

But, it is asked, is it better for a mind to be immortal than mortal? I answer, yes; from the disposition of all men to annex the idea of misery to death; because, in the state in which they are, it is, in fact, a pain and misfortune to them to die, as they are attached to a life they love to preserve. From a similar cause, likewise, they join the idea of immortality to happiness: but, if I separate them, and unite the idea of immortality with misery, I then alter my opinion, and say, “*melius ei esset, si non natus fuisset.*” As therefore immortality, in a certain respect, may become much more fatal than mortality, it is not necessarily preferable to the contrary quality. Immortality, consequently, is not an absolute perfection, but, only a perfection in reference to felicity, which it supposes, to which it relates, and of which it is considered as a part or continuation.*

This world is called by some the porch or entrance into another; “*mors janua vitæ*”. We go from the porch into the house by death; for death does not destroy the soul, that self, which is the living agent. It merely destroys the gross material body. How this is effected I know not. The future re-union of the soul and body is inexplicable.

* Buffier.

explicable. I dare not venture to argue about the whole sphere of possibility, or the extent of capacity in Omnipotence. But, the creation of the substance of our souls, and of our bodies, and the actual union of them at present, is in every respect as inconceivable to me, and in truth much more so, than the uniting them together again, when separated. Neither do I see, why death, which is merely the cessation of the sensual impressions, of the impulses of the passions and appetites, and of the toilsome servitude of the flesh, should preclude a better union, and a more improved state of existence.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is so far, it is said, from being an incitement to virtue, that it is in its very principle wild, mischievous, and afflicting; completely absurd, and contrary to all good and social purposes: it would even give one reason to apprehend, were all mankind convinced of it, that we should one day or other have an universal suicide.* Lamétrie goes further, and says, “from the most distant ages, the entire destruction of the human system at death, was believed and taught by philosophers;” and now, when nature is so well understood, we have a thousand indisputable proofs, that

* L'Antiq. Devoilée,

that there is only one life, and only one term of felicity. Providence does not regard human misdemeanors, says another, with an eye of anger. Infinite power, united with infinite wisdom, in the same Being, does not punish. It either raises to perfection, or annihilates. The idea of a great and of a good God, absolutely excludes the idea of an avenging God.* But, if punishment be ascribed to God, vengeance must be permitted to man, who is created after his image.† In the language of the same school, the soul without the body is not man; as the body without the soul is not man. Man, therefore, though the soul exists, does not exist after death. God, consequently, cannot exercise his justice and his vengeance on what does not exist. Rewards and punishments are, of course, mere tales of prejudice and imposition.‡

But, with submission, I think we have shewn, that reason and philosophy, tradition and revelation, have one and all furnished conclusions of a contrary, and of a more comfortable complexion. If I am, indeed, entirely formed of a material substance, the intellectual principle I possess, must decay, must perish, with my body; there is nothing for me beyond the precincts of the

* Diderot.

† Toussaint.

‡ De L'Ame.

the tomb; and my true line of wisdom is to laugh at an hereafter. But, if it should be true, that my soul is of a different nature from my body, that principle may survive the mansion it inhabits; it may be immortal, and, consequently, the neglect of it may be the most fatal and lamentable inattention I can be guilty of. The doctrine is also, I must conceive, of too much consequence even to present happiness, to be an error. Were there no other argument, this, to a reflecting mind, would be of some consequence. There is a God, and that God must be perfect; and if he be perfect, there must be a difference in the fates of the honest man and the villain.

Without the hope of immortality, what a wretched lot would be assigned to man! He comes into the world without any participation of his own, and shall hereafter be, as if he had never been: he is certain of little in life, and of nothing after it, but that he shall perish everlastingly. In the mean time, he is confined to a world, where neither goodness nor justice are allowed to rule; a world, which was not made for him, but which seems in many respects the bedlam of every other system of intelligent creatures; and with this unlucky circumstance, that
they

they who are most mad, govern, in things of the greatest importance, those who are least so ; a world, wherein men of the greatest genius have been often transported into metaphysical delirium and religious extravagance ; in short, a world, abounding with little else than fools and knaves ; the one of which must provoke his contempt, and the other his indignation. Can any thing be more dreadful, than thus to admit, and to expose, the weakness of human reason ; to acknowledge the blindness, impotence, and irregularity of human passions ; and to take away what alone can restrain them, the hope of an advancement or retribution, in a state future and immortal ? It is not enough, that death delivers us from our pains, unless we are also taught that it deprives us of our pleasures. And as for our advantages in life, and our boasted prerogatives of reason, the brute, according to these doctrines, should seem to enjoy the happier portion. We are deprived of reason and of revelation, of grace and of glory, of God's present providence, and of his future favour. The sense of a life so base and wretched in its nature, and in its existence so short and uncertain ; of faculties impertinent in their use ; of a reason unreasonable in its operations ; of irregularities never to be rectified ; and of misery never to be remedied,

died ; of a God that has no relation to us, nor we to him ; and of an eternity which we must never inherit : is not this to mock our weakness, and to embitter our limited and transitory duration ?*

The man who attempts to kill my body is kind, compared to him who would kill my soul. I can bear to be miserable here ; but, I am filled with horror at the idea of being undone for ever. But, the most profane atheists have been willing to allow, that the belief of another life is a good political invention, and a useful ingredient in the well-governing of the world. Whereby, they grant at least, it is fit these things should be true, if they are not ; or, in any event, that the generality of men should hold them to be true. Others, indeed, have wished to root out all troublesome notions of a future state, endeavouring to persuade themselves and others of their absurdity. Yet, it may reasonably be doubted, whether ever there was one, even of the most hardy, who had brought himself to be absolutely free from fears. They, too generally, are the most assaulted by them. “*Hi sunt qui trepidant, & omnia fulgura pallent.*”

It

* Sketch of Character of Bolingbroke.

It is, and has been by the majority of the world, at all times acknowledged, that the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul is conformable to our desires, and that man is naturally flattered by it. Why then tear from humanity its sweetest hope? Why destroy the spring of our best actions? Why ravish from the unfortunate the sole consolation, which can fortify or inspire them with comfort, in the midst of their afflictions? Why abandon the virtuous to despair? Barbarous philosophy! Leave to us the illusion, if it be so, which cherishes and makes us happy. From what motive, O atheists! do you present your disastrous system? Would you wish to cure men of all apprehensions of a life to come? The prospect of a future state gives the good man no uneasiness. There are none but the iniquitous who tremble at an hereafter. Is it to harden them in their crimes; is it to stifle their remorse; is it to deliver into their hands the pure and amiable, that you labour? Melancholy occupation! Do the wicked alone merit the succours of philosophy? Would you have a religion, where the good man, and the notorious sinner, should be equally held dear by Providence; which should comfort the wicked with the notion that they have nothing to fear; which

should allow them with impunity to brave the laws, and commit, without apprehension, the most enormous crimes, provided their address be adequate to the screening them from the punishment of temporal justice? Such a system must be the misery and the destruction of the world.*

The belief of a future state does not, indeed, always influence men in their conduct; yet it assuredly does at some moments and in some circumstances of their lives. "To say," says Montesquieu, "that religion is not a curbing motive, because it does not always restrain, is like saying, the criminal jurisprudence of a country is not a curbing motive, because it does not always restrain." Thus an author who, to extirpate fanaticism and superstition, preaches atheism, is not more wise than he who would abolish the whole code of law, because there are some who do not observe its ordinances. But, in every view, whether of reason, or of hope, the belief of another life is much the safer side of the question. If we should happen to be mistaken, it costs us nothing: we may live much happier in this world than infidels do, and please ourselves with the enter-
taining

* Holland.

taining dreams of future happiness ; which, if they should prove no better than dreams, are very delightful ; and if death puts an end to us, we shall escape as well in the grave as infidels do. But, on the other side of the question we find the hazard of losing eternal happiness, and of incurring hereafter such positive misery, as infinite wisdom may see fit to inflict. If we believe we shall perish in the grave, and live, as those who have no account to give of their actions, and should find ourselves mistaken in the other world, we must be miserable there. We ought certainly to demand the greatest evidence for that side of the question, where the mistake will do us the most irreparable mischief ; wherefore, nothing less than absolute demonstration can justify the disbelief of another world.*

True philosophy, is the study of the noblest objects which can demand the attention of man. Theology and ethics, like different branches of a fruitful tree, spring from the same root, and that root is the actual system of things. As high as they can be trained up, so high they bear the genuine fruit of knowledge. But, when fantastical gardeners bend the tops of the

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highest

* Sherlock.

highest sprigs, like the *ficus Indica*, down to the earth; if they take root, they bear fruit of an inferior kind, and serve only to plant a labyrinth, wherein the gardeners themselves are lost. It at the same time must be allowed, that he who imagines he can extend general knowledge by the force of pure intellect and abstract meditation, beyond the foundation he has laid in particular knowledge, is just as extravagant in thinking he has what he has not, as he who thinks he is what he is not. He is just as extravagant, as the architect would be, who should undertake to build the roof of the house on the ground, and to lay the foundations in the air.*

All annihilating doctrines are nothing more than the apparent harmonies of misconceived opinions, having no existence in reality; but, they render the unsuspecting mind miserable. Not having the fortitude to be content with uncertainty, knowing its own weakness, and yet incessantly darting beyond its powers, it thus falls into a despondency which is scarcely to be relieved. “*Hæ nugæ seria ducunt in mala.*”

And here let me ask, of what description are those guides, who would lead us to materialism
and

* Bolingbroke.

and extinction? Who were ever so ready to charge others, while they were themselves so chargeable, with absurdity and inconsistency? Who ever railed so much against dogmatists, and were themselves so great dogmatists? Admitting the advantage of immortal hopes, yet contending with the zeal of martyrs for destruction and eternal death; reasoning with the pride of superior spirits, I had almost said the faculties of angels, to prove themselves brutes; these modern Epicureans are surely thus superlatively injurious. Their miserable acquisition, their wretched certainty of intellectual as well as of corporeal death, are but comfortless presents which they would confer upon their fellow-creatures.

In human life, the most glorious or humble prospects are alike, and soon bounded by the grave. The spider weaves his web in the imperial palace, and the owl sings her watch song on the towers of the mighty.* But, we cannot doubt, that numberless worlds, and systems of worlds, compose this amazing whole, the universe; and as little, I think, that the planets which roll about the sun, or those which roll about a multitude of others, are inhabited by

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suitable

* Cantemir.

suitable living creatures. Shall we not be persuaded then, that as there is a gradation of sense and intelligence here, from animated beings, imperceptible to us from their minuteness, without the help of microscopes, and even with them, up to man, in whom, though this be their highest stage, sense and intelligence stop short and remain very imperfect; so there is a gradation from man, through various forms of sense, intelligence, and reason, up to beings, who cannot be known by us, because of their distance, and whose rank in the intellectual system is even above our conceptions?*

Before the Christian dispensation, which alone holds out the glorious prospect of an immortality, the more philosophic systems of religion spoke only in a very general sense of a future state. They even seem to have covered with obscurity and mystery, a subject incapable of human explanation. The Magi of Persia, and the Brahmins of India, who entirely agreed in the doctrine, that the soul of man is a portion of the irresistible principle which pervades the body of the universe, placed the chief happiness after death, in a kind of absorption into the Divinity.

* Bolingbroke.

vinity. This mode of being, however, strictly speaking, is little better than annihilation itself. For the soul, ceasing to have a personal existence, becomes a part of a great whole. Memory is defaced; all passions are utterly unknown; and consciousness is lost. Death, in short, is a kind of reduction of all that composes man into first principles. The material parts are resolved into the four palpable and visible elements; and the invisible and subtile essence which animates the human body, returns, to use their own expression, like a drop into the immense ocean from which it came. “As my earthy part,” says a royal philosopher,* “is derived to me from some common earth, my moisture from some common element of a humid kind, my aerial part from its proper fountain, and the warm or fiery part from its proper fountain also, (for nothing can arise from nothing, or return into it); so my intellectual part hath also come from some common fountain of its own nature; and to these respectively shall they all return.”

Christians, we are told, reject the emanation of the Divinity, seeing it must suppose the Divinity divisible; besides, their religion having

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occasion

* Marcus Aurelius.

occasion for a hell, to torment the souls of the wicked, it would infallibly deliver over to damnation a portion of the Divinity, to be sacrificed to his own proper vengeance. Can any thing, say they, be more absurd? The priest declares the immaterial soul is liable to be burned, or suffer the action of a material fire in hell or in purgatory, and he is believed on his simple *ipse dixit*.^{*} This shall find its answer in its proper place. All, however, must agree with me, that whatever may be the future destiny of man, or of whatever nature the soul may be, material or immaterial, whether regarded as a spirit, or as a portion of the body; we shall always find a soul noble, grand, and determined, in a Socrates, an Aristides, and a Cato; mean, filthy, and contemptible, in a Claudius, a Sejanus, and a Nero; and sublime and piously energetic in a Galilæo, a Newton, and a Montesquieu.

From the universal harmony of things, various deductions have been made relative to matter and mind. Many of the ancients differed about the time when the reunion and resolution of the soul into the substance of God should take place. Some held it to be at death; others, as the Pythagoreans, not till after many transmigrations.

^{*} Syst. de la Nat.

grations. The Platonists, indeed, steered between these opinions, and rejoined pure and unpolluted souls immediately to the universal spirit: but, those which had contracted much defilement, were sent into a succession of other bodies, to purge and purify them, before they returned to their parent substance. This metempsychosis was universally taught and believed, long before the time of Pythagoras; though his superior reputation made it afterwards be reckoned among his peculiar doctrines. There were two kinds of the metempsychosis taught by the Pythagoreans, the moral and the natural. The latter they believed, the first they only preached. The natural metempsychosis was, that the successive transition of the soul into other bodies was physical, and exclusive of all moral designation whatever. Plato, however, as I have said, on receiving this opinion of Pythagoras, gave it the additional improvement, that those changes and transitions were the purgations of impure minds, unfit, by reason of the pollutions they had contracted, to re-ascend the place whence they came, and rejoin that substance whence they were discerped; and consequently, that pure immaculate souls were exempt from this transmigration. Thus, Plato's doctrine of metempsychosis did not, like his master's,

master's, necessarily suppose all subjected to it without distinction, or for the same length of time.*

Pythagoras held the old maxim, "Ex nihilo nihil fit;" and therefore held the soul to be taken from some foreign and external substance. He allowed only two substances, God and matter; whence, as he taught the soul to be immaterial, he could not possibly conceive it to be any other than a part of God. Hence Sextus Empiricus says, that Pythagoras and Empedocles, and the whole company of the Italic school, held, that our souls are not only of the same nature with one another, and with the Gods, but likewise with the irrational souls of brutes; for that there is one spirit which pervades the universe, and serves it for a soul, which unites us and them together. These discerped parts of the universal spirit, the *anima mundi*, or whatever other name they gave it, acted, according to these philosophers, with different degrees of activity and force, according to the different nature and disposition of the matter with which these parts were invested. Whatever, therefore, may be said to the contrary, it is beyond doubt, I believe, that the *intellectus agens* of Aristotle was

was the very same with the *anima mundi* of Pythagoras and Plato.

The transmigration of souls was likewise a common opinion among the Jews. The Rabbins stiled it the revolution of souls, in opposition to the revolution of the dead; whereby they meant the rolling of the carcasses of Jews, that happened to be interred in the polluted earth of the Gentiles, through the secret caverns of the earth of Palestine, where they believed all Jews are to arise at the resurrection: and hence, some of them are said to have travelled in their old age to the Holy Land, to lay their bones there, to avoid the disturbance of a subterraneous pilgrimage. To escape the trouble of this posthumous journey, was the reason why Jacob, it is said, charged his son Joseph to convey his corpse from Egypt to Canaan. According to Josephus, however, it was received among the dogmata of the Pharisees, that the souls of good men did not perish, but did pass into another body,—*μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα*. And Tisbi relates, it was the common opinion of the circumcised doctors, that every soul animates three bodies. Thus, by virtue of this vicissitude they assert the soul of Adam to have informed the body of king David; and that the soul of
David

David will, by secret revolutions, wind itself into the Messiah.

The soul is immortal and *pre-existent* to the body, say the ancients; endued with knowledge of eternal ideas, which, in her union with the body, she loses, until awakened by intelligible discourses from sensible objects. Thus, all her learning is but reminiscence; a recovery of her first knowledge. The body, being compounded, is dissolved by death; the soul, being simple, passes into another life, incapable of corruption.* That the soul is immortal, Plato proves by these arguments: The soul where it is, confers life; now that which confers life to others, never admits death: but, that which is such, is immortal. It is only perceptible by the intellect, and not by the sight. Hence, it must be simple, neither can it be at any time dissolved, or corrupted. The contrary is true, concerning the body; for it is subject to sight and to the other senses; and as it is compounded, so shall it be dissolved.

The expressions, the soul is part of God, discerped from him, and of his nature, which perpetually occur in the writings of the ancients, are

* Socrates.

are only highly figurative phrases, and not measurable by the severe standard of metaphysical propriety. There was one consequence drawn from this principle, indeed, and universally held by antiquity; the eternity of the soul, *à parte ante*, as well as *à parte post*, which the Latins well expressed by the word *sempiternus*, properly signifying that which hath neither beginning nor end. “It is a thing well known,” says Cudworth, “that according to the sense of philosophers, these two circumstances were always included in that one opinion of the soul’s immortality, namely, its pre-existence, as well as its post-existence. Neither was there ever any of the ancients before Christianity, who held the soul’s future permanency after death, who did not likewise assert its pre-existence; they clearly perceiving, if it were once granted the soul was generated, it could never be proved but that it might also be corrupted: and, therefore, the assertors of the soul’s immortality commonly began here, first to prove its pre-existence.

That mankind had existed in some state previous to the present, was the opinion of the wisest sages of the most remote antiquity. It was held by the Gymnosophists of Egypt, the Brahmins
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of India, the Magi of Persia, and the greatest philosophers of Greece and Rome. It was likewise adopted by some of the Fathers of the Christian Church, and frequently enforced by her primitive writers. Modern divines, indeed, hold this doctrine to be untenable; for, as far as we are able to discover, this is the first stage upon which the souls of men ever appeared; and hence there is no need of recurring to a former scene, to solve the perplexed difficulties of Providence. But, are we certain, the conjunction of a male and female can create, or bring into being, an immortal soul? Or rather, is it not more probable, they are merely capable of preparing a material habitation for it, but that there must have been an immaterial pre-existent inhabitant ready to take possession? Reason assures us, that an immortal soul, which will exist eternally after the dissolution of the body, must have eternally existed before the formation of it; for whatever has no end, can never have had any beginning, but must exist in some manner, which bears no relation to time, to us totally incomprehensible. If, therefore, the soul is to continue to exist in a future life, it must have existed in a former. *

This

* Soame Jenyns.

This reasoning strongly supports the metempsychosis. It goes to prove that this world can be designed for nothing better than a prison, in which we are a while confined to receive punishment for the offences committed in a former state, and an opportunity of preparing ourselves for the enjoyment of happiness in a future life. From the metempsychosis, however, arose the doctrine of the *metamorphosis*, a very considerable part of the Pagan theology. From the collections made of these by former writers, Ovid gathered his materials, and formed them into a poem on the most sublime and regular plan; a popular history of Providence, carried down in as methodical a manner as the graces of poetry would allow, from the creation to his own times, through the Egyptian, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman histories. The usual strain, however, you will observe of all the writers of metamorphosis is, that happiness is certain, so long as piety is preserved towards the Gods.*

But, not to enter too diffusively into a subject which has, indeed, in some respects engaged our consideration already, let us not recur to human transfigurations into vegetables, nor even certain classes of animals into other classes of animals, but

* Divine Legation.

but, let us come directly to the question of intellect, as it appears in the inferior tribes of beings. For my own part, I am free to acknowledge the necessity of an immaterial substance in brutes as well as in men. I know Des Cartes was of opinion, there was nothing but matter and motion in brutes. But, Des Cartes was not infallible. Neither can I conceive how the immortality of the human soul can be injured, by admitting that the souls of brutes are immaterial. The rational soul's being such, does not depend upon the brute souls not being such. Both may be immaterial, and yet it does not follow, that both are equal, or of the same kind of immaterial substance. The difference of mental powers proves a difference of design in the Author of their natures. If two beings are made specifically different, it is probable they were made for specifically different purposes.

“It being agreed,” says an ingenious writer, “that brutes have knowledge, they must, in consequence, have a soul. But, what is that soul? Is it matter or is it spirit? It must be one or the other, and you dare not say which. To say it is spirit, is contrary to the principles of your religion. To say their state is that of a probationary

bationary punishment, is not a whit more orthodox ; although Christ drove the evil spirit into a herd of swine.* *Incidit in Scyllam, qui vult vitare Charybdim.* We must set this author right. I see no reason why there should not be different species of immaterial souls, as different species of material bodies. This involves no absurdity ; neither is it contradictory to suppose a variety of immaterial souls, both in nature and degree, for insects, fishes, birds, and beasts. So far from improbable is such a scheme, that it ought to be looked upon as one of the greatest beauties of the creation, and that which best shews the rising scale of immaterial beings. It would be a wide gap, indeed, if there were nothing between dead matter and the human soul, especially when we see such a gradation of workmanship and perfection maintained from rude, unformed earth, through all the species of plants and animals, up to the human fabric, and while we have the conviction, that so carried up to the human soul, it cannot possibly end there.†

Brutes are determined by irresistible and unerring instinct to those truths, which are necessary to their well-being. We deviate from them perpetually. May we not, with justice, demand,
VOL. IV. F therefore,

* Lang, du Betes.

† Baxter.

therefore, it is asked, if it be not as likely that other animals should share the human reason, which is denied, as that man should share the divine reason, which is affirmed? Beasts, are many of them, naturally, extremely vicious. We know perfectly they cannot sin, for they are not free. Carnivorous beasts and birds are cruel. Insects of the same species devour each other. Many tribes are perfidious and ungrateful; others are jealous and revengeful. In the schools it is said, they are necessitated to evil; to trouble the general order; to do every thing, in short, that is contrary to natural equity, and to the principles of virtue.* But, there can be no obligations on beings who are incapable of understanding the laws of God. Not being endued with the means of acquiring ideas of justice and injustice, it is evident nothing can be expected from them of the like tendency, that must be expected from men to whom is given a capacity of knowledge. Morally speaking, therefore, there is not any thing positively commanded, or positively forbidden to animals. They have no regulation or guide, but one appropriated and uniform ray of intellect. Incapable of the distinction between merit and demerit, they have no claim upon divine justice. Their souls may, therefore,

* Lang. de Betes.

therefore, be supposed mortal, though not material. *

Bolingbroke says, it would be as wise to talk of our walking eternally, as of our thinking eternally. The philosophical absurdity of this argument is too palpable to need a comment. We will now proceed to a more awful subject. In the mean time, if conviction have not found its way into your mind, let me at least intreat you to have confidence in the belief of a comfortable and elevating doctrine, which no man yet was ever able to disprove. He who pursues the glimmering steps of hope, with a stedfast, but not with a presumptuous eye, may avoid that gloomy rock, on either side of which spread the horrid abysses of incredulity and superstition. The real sage looks upon himself as a sojourner only in this world. But, if you ask him where his country lies, he points, like Anaxagoras, with his finger to the heavens.

* *Traite des Animaux.*

LETTER LXV.

THIS little scene of life, in which we are so busily engaged, has some sort of reference to a much larger plan of things. Whether we are any way related to the more distant parts of the boundless universe into which we are brought, is altogether uncertain. All on that side of the question is incomprehensible : we know nothing of what has been, what now is, or what shall be hereafter. The utmost perfection of human reason, is, indeed, the knowledge of its own defects, and the limits of its own confined powers. It is a lamp, which serves us very well for the common occupations of life, that are near at hand, but can shew us no clear prospect at a distance. Yet we love to tread on the brink, where light and darkness begin to mingle. We delight in approaching that precipice, where obscurity hangs over the unfathomable ways of Omniscience.

“ You believe I have an intelligent soul,” says Plato, “ because you perceive order in my words, and in my actions. Judge then from the order and harmony which you perceive in nature, if there must not be an universal mind, which regulates the world.” Every man who
exists,

exists, if he make a right use of his reason, may easily become more certain of the being of a supreme independent cause, than he can be of any thing else, besides his own existence.

Hobbes and Spinoza, both advance this absurd tenet, that there neither is any where, nor possibly can be, any principle of motion, or beginning of operation at all; but that every thing is caused necessarily, by an eternal chain of dependent causes and effects, without any independent original. Now, to suppose an endless succession of dependent causes and effects without any original, or first and self-actuating principle, is supposing a series of dependent things, to be from eternity, produced from nothing. If there be no first cause, every thing in the universe must be passive, and nothing active; every thing moved, and no mover; every thing effect, and nothing cause.* But Spinoza himself, notwithstanding the vastness of his disbelief, in another part of his work, is obliged to quit so contradictory a ground. Every body in motion, or at rest, says he, must have been determined to that motion or rest by some other body, which must itself like-

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wise

* Clarke.

wise have been determined by a third, and so on
in infinitum.*

The reach of our knowledge is limited to material phænomena, and to ideas; consequently the powers of universal causation are, in every respect, inexplicable. It is a law, however, that no effect can be without a cause. This, indeed, is denied; and it is said, that so learned and mathematical a conclusion may be of use in its application to the world, whence it was drawn, but that, beyond this, it is a blind guide, and can afford no information. But, will any man in his senses say, it is less difficult to conceive how the world came to be, and continues as it is, without, than with, an intelligent cause? It is absolutely and undeniably certain, that *something has existed from all eternity*. No atheist, in any age, has ever presumed to assert the contrary. For, since something now is, it is evident something always was; otherwise, the things that now are must have been produced out of nothing, absolutely, and without cause; which is a plain contradiction in terms. That which exists must have had a cause, a reason, a ground for its existence †.

Mind

* Ethic. par. 2, Pup. 13, Lemma 3.

† Clarke.

Mind is the most ancient of things ; and as it alone has activity, and the principle of motion in itself, it is the efficient cause of every thing. Besides ours, there are, most probably, other intelligences in the universe, and infinitely superior to ours ; and one, highest of all, in whom resides the intellectual world, and who virtually comprehends every thing existing. The visible world, indeed, has been said (which, however, I do not insist upon) to be nothing but the intellectual world made perceptible to the sense. Ideas, or intellectual forms alone, say the Platonists and Pythagoreans, can be properly said to exist, being immaterial, eternal, and unchangeable. Matter and body are, by their natures, in a continual flux and change ; and hence it is only by participation of the intellectual form that the corporeal form can be said to have existence ; for these intellectual forms, though of their own nature immortal, yet being united with body, they by accident partake of its affections, and become liable to change.

We have already confessed, that philosophy affords no real lights as to the origin of the soul. After exhausting all its powers and knowledge in the pursuit, it only finds it cannot perceive any positive similitude between a spiritual and

a material substance ; therefore it cannot conceive that the soul derives any part of its origin from matter or bodily substance ; and consequently, it must be from God. Physical proofs of the immortality of the soul, it is true, are deduced from this among other considerations, that with all our exertions of reason, we can discover no subject or principle of destruction in it ; for, in short, we know of no destruction but what is occasioned by a change or separation in the parts of a whole. Now, we not only do not discover any parts in the soul, but farther, we perceive positively that it is a substance perfectly one, and which has no parts. *

It is not to be denied, that it is impossible to obtain any knowledge of the power or agency of Providence. Our organs can only discover phænomena, not the causes of phænomena. When we say, any thing is caused, or generates another, we can only mean, we have seen such things precede, and follow each other. The proofs of a Divinity, therefore, as supported by some metaphysical arguments, have been more disadvantageous than useful to the cause of truth. Piety and philosophy have as often been at variance, as in unison. The connections, which have been adduced in some instances, instead

* Buffier.

stead of leading to a divine mind, as the first cause of what we perceive, have necessarily led the enquirer into the palpable and inevitable world of matter. We are not to say, the sun is not the cause of light, because we do not accurately comprehend how he possesses it, and in what manner it originates from him. But when we can trace the secondary causation no further, it is most unphilosophical to imagine it is therefore at an end: it is then we should believe, a more intimate acquaintance might continue the chain, and eventually lead us to the source.

Nothing is without an adequate cause why it is; and why it is so, rather than otherwise. Where there is no cause there can be no effect. We cannot comprehend, how one intelligent being could have brought about such an universal effect. Yet, what has been thought beyond the power of any being, has been ascribed to a cause void of all power, *dead matter, and blind necessity*. This is not as it should be. We must have an adequate cause to a positive effect. We are not to plant a motive power in dead matter, to make dead matter living matter. Virtue, power, and force, cannot be without a subject; nor can they be communicated from the terminating surface of one particle to that of another without

without a subject. Nothing can act, where it is not; nor can matter act beyond its terminating surface. Material action, at a distance, is repugnant to reason. Spinoza's assertion, that every thing in the world is God, or that nothing but God could exist, includes in it this plain contradiction, of making the effect the same thing with the cause, and confounding the most opposite natures; for it is absolutely impossible the same being should be both material and immaterial; or void of all power, as matter is, and at once the origin of all power, as an immaterial being must be.*

It is singular that man, who cannot account for any thing without him, has yet the hardiness to deny a God. Can we give even a conjectural account of any one phænomenon in nature, from the rotation of the great orbs of the universe, to the germination of a blade of grass, without having recourse to him, as the primary incomprehensible cause?† The study of nature ought to elevate the ideas of man, one should conceive, to his Creator; but, it only serves to increase his presumption. The philosopher, who flatters himself he has penetrated into the secrets of existence, is vain enough to compare his pretended wisdom to the

* Baxter.

† Bisop Watson.

the infinite wisdom of his Maker. He approves, censures, corrects, and prescribes laws to Nature, and limits to Omnipotence: and thus, while with idle systems, he is busily occupied in arranging this machine of the world, the poor husbandman, who sees the sun and the rain contribute in their turns to fertilize his fields, admires and blesses the hand, whose bounties he receives, without troubling himself about the manner in which they are bestowed. He does not seek to justify his ignorance, or his vices, by his infidelity. He does not arrogantly censure the works of his Creator, nor attack his Divine Master to display his own self-sufficiency.*

But there is an arbitrary word, which men are extravagantly fond of, which yet is totally destitute of meaning. What is nature; that is, what is it in contradistinction to the Author of nature? Examine it narrowly; you will find it eludes every possible research. Who teaches the young of all animals without exception, first, to make use of their limbs, and move their bodies? It is a secret, you will say, to all the philosophers on earth, how spontaneous motion is performed. And how can every brute, every creature, so readily perform an action, the nature and reason of

* Rousseau.

of which is such a mystery? Who guides them in their work? Spontaneous motion, in the first instance, is neither performed by reason, nor by habit. Is not the constant direction of Deity therefore necessary? Is it not necessary also in the formation of animals, as well as vegetables? And farther, when the little living creatures have no faculties to contrive, nor knowledge to comprehend, the mysterious process they are employed in, is it not still equally necessary, and equally plain, they must be guided by the same wisdom, which constantly directs the formation of their bodies? Were it not for this providential direction, no species of animals, not even man, could overcome the first difficulties of life, but, must inevitably give up their new-gotten breath, under an inability and ignorance what to do to preserve it. Nature, therefore, may be stiled the divinity of the atheist; the knowledge of the ignorant, and the refuge of the slothful mind, in which all contradictions are consistent. Nature, as an universal unmeaning cause, supersedes every inquiry; and as a mere non-entity, requires neither fear nor reverence.

“He is a superficial philosopher,” says a great writer,* “who adheres to atheism.” But,
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* Bacon.

I rather think, with all deference, it should be said, atheism is not the vice of ignorance, but of misapplied knowledge; although I believe it to be true, in fact, that sound learning and information never made a man an atheist. Many, indeed, have doubted; for incertitude is the lot of humanity. But, few, if any, have denied, who have thoroughly considered. There are, and have been unquestionably, persons who have never set themselves heartily to be informed; who have secretly wished the general belief not to prove true; who have been less attentive to evidence than to difficulties; and who, of course, have been incapable of conviction, though upheld by demonstration. And yet this description of men is ever the most contaminated by bigotry. They are wedded to opinions full of contradiction and impossibility, and at the same time reject opinions merely because they agree with common sense. Notions, that fall in with the common reason of mankind, and that have a tendency towards promoting the happiness of society, they explode as errors and prejudices. But, they should, for the public good, act at least so consistently, as not to burn with zeal for licentious emancipation, and for absurdity.

The awful, unaccountable, and epidemical contempt, which has sometimes been shewn for

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an Eternal Being, is incomprehensible. Yet, there is no language in which you will not find the exclamation, "O my God!" No man who is grievously afflicted, no father or mother, who are deprived of their offspring, who will not cast up their eyes to heaven, and in their misery heave out a secret sigh towards the Supreme Being. It is a strange influence which custom has upon perverse and crooked spirits, whose thoughts reach no farther than their senses, that what they have seen and been used to, they make the standard and measure of nature and reason. No men are more tenacious of their little opinions, nor more petulantly censorious. And it is generally so, that those who have the least evidence for the truth of favourite opinions, are most peevish and impatient in the defence of them. These men are the last to be cured of prejudice, for they have the worst of diseases, and do not so much as know themselves to be sick. Weak reasons commonly produce strong passions : * and he who believes that dead matter can produce the effects of life and reason, is an hundred times more credulous than the most thorough-paced believer that ever existed.

It does, indeed, sometimes occur, that a morally well intentioned mind may fall into this abyss

* Burnet.

abyss of absurdity, this hypothesis of atheism. When it does, how from the very bottom of our hearts do we pity the blindness, which can lead so fatally astray ! A blindness in one, who on other occasions may perhaps see clearly ; and a rooted obstinacy of opinions in one, who, on other points, may be full of candour. But, when a man has withdrawn himself from the noise of this busy world, locked up his senses and his passions, and every thing that would unite him with it, commanded a general silence in the soul, and suffers not a thought to stir but what looks inwards ; let him then reflect seriously, and ask himself, what am I ? and how came I into being ? I am nothing but thoughts, fleeting thoughts, which chace and extinguish one another ; and my being, for ought I know, is successive, and as dying as they are, and renewed to me every moment. Hence, therefore, in reason, should I not believe, I stand or fall at the mercy of other causes, and as I am not certain of my existence three minutes hence, that it cannot depend upon my own will, or my own sufficiency ? *

Let us consider a few of the most familiar circumstances of animal existence. I rise from my seat. By whose power ? I proceed a step. Who

Who assists me? I move my hand, my finger; I pronounce a word. Must I have recourse to the living powers of dead matter for this? I feel my pulse, observe my respiration. What action and power are exerted in these? Who exerts it? Are inert particles, finely set together, sufficient? Philosophy will not allow me to admit of such reasoning. What am I to admit of then? Can power and wisdom be the effect of nothing? Or of any thing but a powerful and wise being? Does vigilant matter perform all while I sleep? Is it unphilosophical credulity to believe a God? Is not that power possible, which is actually exerted? Is not God a more worthy cause than dead matter, universal chance, universal necessity, something that acts powerfully and wisely, without either wisdom or power? * But the atheist laughs at an intelligent cause; and yet would he not, in the same breath, laugh at a man as a fool who should come to him and say, the armillary sphere of Leyden, which represents the Copernican system, (a sorry work in comparison with the world) was arranged, fabricated, and put together by itself?

Matter, in the doctrines of many, has usurped the power of the Deity; the power of the human

* Baxter.

human soul, and the power of all other living and intelligent causes. "Matter," says Lucretius, "could not have been created ; for, if natural bodies ever rose spontaneously out of nothing, we should see men spring out of the sea ; fishes and birds from the earth ; and, herds of cattle burst out of the clouds." Moreover, if matter had not been eternal, all things would long ago have fallen into nothing, and sprung up again out of nothing. But all the infinity of nothingness of this ingenious poet, his huge monstrous necessity, and empty unsupported causation of things, itself nothing, and belonging to nothing, is plainly to be referred to the natural powers of inactive matter. Yet, does it indeed imply a contradiction, to produce something out of nothing ? The mind produces thought ; the fire produces heat ; the sun produces light ; which are all distinct from the substances which produce them : and why could not God have produced all things out of nothing, out of no pre-existent matter at first, as well as produce these accidents, modes, or appearances, every moment ?

Again, can the abettors of this hypothesis tell, or can they comprehend, how those ideas are formed which enable them to reflect and determine on the eternity of matter ? A man who is

VOL. IV.

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born blind cannot intuitively reason upon the variety of colours, or the principles of perspective: but, because he is thus unfortunate, is it true there is neither sun, difference of colours, nor the faculty of vision? Had the world been eternal, we should not have had existence. Nothing commences in an eternal being. We confound too often time and eternity. Time is changeable. The past supposes a commencement, the present a succession; and the future, a termination. Eternity is not susceptible of any division. In eternity there is neither beginning, progression, nor end. Time may be marked, eternity cannot. Moreover, the principle of an eternal creation involves a most palpable contradiction. A creation supposes a commencement; an eternity, no commencement. Is not all such reasoning, therefore, for the eternity of the earth, against the eternity of the Creator, as preposterous, as giving superior stability to the clouds which flit round the summits, and power sufficient to root up the mountains of the Alps? Are we to discard God, and make man the eternal Being?

If matter had no cause of existence, it must be self-existent, or existence must belong to its nature: there is no medium. And if it be self-existent,

existent, it must exist necessarily ; a thing whose existence is of itself, and belonging to its nature, cannot be indifferent to exist or not exist : and if it exists necessarily, it must also be independent on any thing else for its existence. One of these two points must be unalterably true. Matter either began to be ; or did not begin to be. There must have been an eternal something ;—the utmost stretch of scepticism cannot conceive an eternal nothing. Would it not sound strangely to talk of a self-existent house, an uncaused pyramid, an unformed statue ? Figuration is one of those things, which unavoidably imply causation. The figure, the quantity, the location of any part of matter, must as clearly lead our thoughts to a cause of them, not matter, as the dimensions and figure of a house lead us to a cause of them, not the house itself. *

To be self-existent, is not to be produced by itself, for that would be an express contradiction, but it is to exist in the nature of the thing itself. Thus the unchangeable and independent being, which has existed from eternity without any external cause of its existence, must be self-existent, that is, necessarily existent. All, in a

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word,

* Baxter.

word, that has been said about the eternity of matter is poor and unsatisfactory. We cannot admit of uncaused *hamuli* or branches, whereby particles of matter have been implicated and entangled in one another. We cannot admit of an uncaused compression, by the effect of a superincumbent and surrounding fluid, nor of any inherent indefinite impulse, not even the attraction of gravitation. We must have recourse to a primary cause, that has more power and energy than matter possesses. The world, unquestionably, had a beginning; and such beginning, from counsel and design, proves an eternal God; for otherwise the materials of which it is framed, being supposed to have been always and in continual motion and tumult, must have been at last disposed to fall into this order; and the parts of matter, after various agitations, must have been at last entangled and knit together, in the manner in which we see things combined at present. But can any man think it reasonable to imagine, that in the infinite variety which is in the universe, all things should have happened by chance, as well and as orderly as the greatest wisdom could have contrived them? Whoever does this, must do it from misapprehension, certainly not from understanding. Or can we suppose a beginning of motion in that which is moved,

moved, and not in the efficiency of some other cause, both powerful and impulsive? There is no possibility of admitting an infinite and eternal chain of effects, without any cause at all.

But let us see how the ancients thought and argued upon this subject. After having risen with great sublimity to the contemplation of an almighty Power, and contemplated his attributes, many of them turned their attention to another substance, altogether different, though not less abstract, of which they never doubted the existence, as its qualities are in some sort palpable, though its origin be still an object of dispute. This substance was matter. Was it eternal? Was it created out of nothing? With these questions they were often confounded, because the solution of them was too great for the powers of the human mind. In this uncertainty, they embraced in general the opinion which seems at first sight subject to the fewest difficulties, when we have nothing but mere reason for our guide. The idea of creation, that idea by which we conceive nothing formed into something, by a mere act of volition, was to them, they said, incomprehensible. They admitted, therefore, two principles eternal and co-existent, but totally distinct in their nature; the one active, the
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other passive; the one the mover, the other the moved; the one the efficient, the other the instrumental cause: the first God, the second matter; from both of which all things that exist have proceeded.*

Almost all the heathen philosophers, who held the eternity of the world, in whose authority and reasons our modern atheists so greatly boast and triumph, defended their opinion by such arguments, as plainly shew they did by no means intend to assert, that the material world was the original, independent, self-existing being, in opposition to the belief of the existence of a supreme all-governing mind, which is the notion of God. Their arguments are wholly levelled to prove either that something needs must be eternal, and that the universe could not possibly arise out of nothing, absolutely and without cause; or that the world is an eternal and necessary effect, flowing from the essential and immutable energy of the Divine Nature; or else that the world is an eternal voluntary emanation from the all-wise and supreme cause: none of which opinions or arguments will in the least aid our modern atheists, who would exclude supreme mind and intelligence from the universe. So far from teaching

* Le Clerc de Septchenec

teaching that matter is the first and original cause of all things, Aristotle expressly describes God to be an intelligent being, *Noûs*; the first mover of all things, himself immoveable, and affirms that if there was nothing but matter in the world, there would be no original cause, but an infinite progression of causes, which would be, says he, absurd. Plato speaks still more fully of the nature and attributes of God, 'Ο ποιητῆς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦδε πάντος.*

The whole of the ancient philosophy, however, we are told, was merely the rattles and baubles of an infant world †. So, indeed, it may be made, when designedly or ignorantly misrepresented. Nothing so easy as to give a description of it like the peripatetic riddle of matter, *Ælia et ælia crispis nec mas, nec fœmina, nec androgyna, nec casta, nec meretrix, nec pudica, sed omnia*; but when looked at with candour and fairness, much of it will be found undeserving the accusation of even dark, mysterious, and enigmatical. No sect of philosophers has ever existed, which has not fallen into some extravagancies. Epicurus alone took the word *σαφηνότητα*, perspicuity, for his motto. But, though the arguments against the belief of the being of an all-wise Creator and

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Governor

* Clarke,

† Bolingbroke.

Governor of the world, which this same Epicurus, and his follower Lucretius, drew from the faults which they imagined they could find in the frame and constitution of the earth, were insisted upon boldly, yet they were so inconsiderable and poor, that even in that period of philosophy, the generality of men contemned and despised them, as of no force. But, how would they have been abashed if they had lived in these days, when those very things which they conceived to be faults and blunders, are discovered to be useful, and of exceeding benefit to the preservation and well-being of the whole ! To mention no more, if Tully, from the very imperfect knowledge in astronomy, which his time afforded, could be so confident of the heavenly bodies being disposed and moved by a wise and understanding mind, as to declare, that whoever asserted the contrary, was void of understanding. *Cælestem ergo admirabilem ordinem incredibilemque constantiam, ex qua conservatio et salus omnium omnis oritur, qui vacare mente putat, is ipse mentis expers habendus est.* * What would he have said, had he known our modern discoveries? †

Among the Greeks, we read of Theodorus of Cyrene, and Diagoras the Melian, both professed
atheists ;

* De Natura Deorum.

† Clarke.

atheists ; the latter of whom set up a school of atheism at Athens, for which he was prosecuted by the Athenians ; but by flying the country, he escaped the punishment of death, which was to have been inflicted on him. About twenty years before, they had proceeded against Protagoras, another philosopher, for only doubting of the being of a God. Both these had been the scholars of Democritus, the founder of the atomical hypothesis, which is in its consequences an atheistical scheme ; for though it allows the being of a God, it yet, by denying his providence, denies in effect his existence. From Democritus also Epicurus derived his system. But may it not, it is asked, admit of some doubt, whether these philosophers were really atheists, or whether they were only branded as such, by denying the divinity of false gods ?

It is a circumstance extremely curious, that the Heathens, who were directed only by the light of nature, should be endued with such piety and veneration towards God, as they manifested in their adoration of the *Deus optimus maximus*, the sole, infinite, eternal Preserver of all things. All the ancient theology, and theogony, is only an account of the divine attributes and providence, in an enigmatical and mythologi-

mythological manner; and it was only owing to the confined capacities of the vulgar, that they blundered into polytheism. The *Zeus*, or Jupiter, was but the Ether; *Hera*, or Juno, the Air; *Kronos*, or Saturn, Time; because before the world was, time was. "What God is," says Socrates, "I know not; what he is not, I know."

"Whatsoever is moved," says Chrysippus, "must necessarily be moved by another, either external or internal. But, lest this progression be into infinite, we must of necessity, at last, come to one First Mover, which is not moved by another. This First Mover, the cause and origin of all motion, is immoveable, one, eternal, and indivisible, void of all quality.* The world was made by God; for if there be any thing which produces such things, as man though endowed with reason cannot produce, that, doubtless, is greater and stronger, and more powerful than man. But man cannot make the celestial orbs; that, therefore, which made them, transcends man; and what can that be but God? † Heraclitus, who lived about the 69th Olympiad, says, "Men are ignorant, that God preserves the great bodies of the universe, reducing

* Aristotle.

† Chrysippus.

reducing their inequality to an even temper ; that he makes whole those which are broken ; stops such as are falling ; gathers the dispersed together ; illuminates the dark with his light ; terminates the infinite with certain bounds ; gives form to things which have none ; gives sight to things void of sense ; permeates all substance, striking, composing, dissolving, condensing, diffusing ; he dissolves the dry into moist ; he condenses the looser air, and continually moves the things above, and settles those beneath.*

According to Plato, there are three *αρχαι*, or principles. These are the *αγαθος*, good, or the supreme mind ; the *νος*, his intellect or ideas ; and the *ψυχη*, or soul of the world. The second of these principles, Philo, the learned Jew of Alexandria, called Logos, a term borrowed from the Scriptures, in consequence of its being there said, that the world was made by the word or logos of God, as Plato has made his *νος*, ideas, or intelligible world, to be the immediate source or cause of the visible universe. † This logos, indeed, is not to be taken as the *verbum*, the enunciated reason of God ; but, as the reason in the mind of the Deity. And it is somewhat extraordinary, that this reason is the second

* Diogenes Laertius.

† Priestley.

second person of the Christian Trinity, by whom we are told the world was created, and answers to the θεός δημιουργός of Plato, who is also the second person of his trinity : a doctrine, however he came by the knowledge of it, with which he was evidently acquainted. *

The speculative, or metaphysical theology of the Platonists, and their fundamental principles of knowledge, we are indeed told, are only abstract and intellectual perplexities. To draw principles, and proleptic notions, directly out of the mind of man, was the same thing as to anatomize the eye, in order to search for the first principles and postulata of optics : for as it is the office of the eye, to contemplate and observe those objects with which it is presented, and thence to frame optical rules and maxims ; so it is the office of the mind to speculate and consider those things which are any way conveyed to its notice, and thence to make general rules and observations, that after scrutiny and examination, are justly admitted for proleptic and fundamental verities. Metaphysical definitions, in order to the discovering the hidden essence of things, are mere vanity. And still further, we are so far from attaining any certain and real knowledge of incorporeal

* Monboddo.

corporeal beings, that we are not able to know any thing of corporeal substances, abstracted from their accidents. Nothing can more perplex the human faculties, than the simple ideas of naked matter, and impalpable essence.*

Having searched into all kinds of science, Socrates observed, he said, three imperfections and inconveniencies. First, that it was improper to leave those affairs which concern mankind, to inquire into things we are not connected with. Secondly, that these things are above the reach of man, whence are occasioned disputes and opposition ; some acknowledging no God, others worshipping sticks and stones ; some asserting one simple being, others infinite ; some that all things are moved, others that all things are immovable. And, thirdly, that these things, if attained, could not be practised ; for he, who, contemplating divine mysteries, inquires by what necessity things were made, cannot himself make any thing, or upon occasion produce winds, waters, seasons, and the like.† Socrates, notwithstanding this, was not so mad as to exclude mind from the system of the universe.

Were

* Platonic Philosophy.

† Xenophon.

Were all the writings of the ancients still in being, we should, no doubt, find an enormous mass of contradictions. As it is, we find an abundance of difference about first principles. That material principles were incomprehensible, was manifest from the disagreement of even the dogmatists about them. Pherecydes, the Syrian, asserted earth to be the principle of all things; Thales the Milesian, water; Anaximander, his disciple, Infinite; Anaximenes and Diogenes Appollionates, air; Hippasus the Metapontine, fire; Xenophanes, earth and water; Euripides, fire and air; Hippo of Rhegium, fire and water; Onomacritus, in his Orphics, fire, water, and earth; the followers of Aristotle, the Peripatetics, a circular moving body, consisting of fire, air, water, and earth; Democritus and Epicurus, atoms; Anaxagoras, *homoiomeria*; Diodorous Cronus, least and indivisible bodies; Heraclides of Pontus, uncompounded bulks, or little bodies; the Pythagoreans, numbers; the Mathematicians, the terms of bodies; Strato the naturalist, qualities. These, perhaps, are sufficient to shew the incomprehensibility of the elements and material principles. They all go to prove the elements either to be bodies or incorporeal. We, say the sceptics, conceive it sufficient to prove that both bodies and incorporeals

poreals are incomprehensible, and thence it will follow, the elements must be incomprehensible. *

In this vast variety of opinions embraced by ancient philosophers, we still see some tendency towards a system. I do not mean, indeed, that it was so among the followers of Pyrrho. They affirmed and maintained, that their arguments, after they had overthrown all other arguments, at length overthrew themselves. Thus we are not to say, there are four elements, because there are four elements. Things are hot and cold, not from any natural quality, but by law and custom. Demophon was shivering in the sun, and burning in the shade. The founder himself took away all distinction between honest and dishonest, just and unjust; he discovered that nothing was according to truth; that men acted by habit, and not according to nature; because any thing was not that very thing, more than another thing. But all this is nothing to our purpose. The fact is, that whatever were the doctrines of the ancients, they, in general, did not exalt nature at the expence of the Deity; nor did they derogate from his perfections, by endeavouring to pass false principles, as sound and rational.

Some

* Stanley.

Some writers of modern times, who have shewn little respect for the sacred books which Christianity hath given for the guidance of erring man, have yet spoken with veneration of certain of the Pagan characters of antiquity. But, there have been others, who, with contemptuous indiscrimination, have levelled the greatest philosophers of all ages, and of all persuasions, into one undistinguished mass of absurdity and contradiction. The moral Bolingbroke, speaking of them, says, “ they seem to acquire knowledge only as a necessary step to error, and grow so fond of the latter, they esteem it no longer an human, but raise it by an imaginary apotheosis, to a divine science. These searchers after truth, these lovers of wisdom,” says he, “ are nothing better than venders of false wares. Philosophers, and metaphysical divines, thus have wandered many thousand years in imaginary light, but in real darkness. They have staggered about, and jostled each other in their dreams. They have sometimes been mad, but more often blasphemous. Whether corporeal or intellectual, does not Plato treat every subject like a bombast poet, or a frantic theologian? The theology and practically virtuous doctrines of the Stoics, are they not equally absurd? Is not all their declamation mere figurative, sublime

blime, metaphysical nonsense? As to the Christian dispensation, the early fathers were superstitious, credulous, lying impostors : the greatest of them, unfit to write or speak on any subject, that required closeness of reasoning, an evangelical candour, or even common ingenuousness. The more recent have not been in the least better. Their blasphemy is notorious, on the head of the internal divine characters of Scripture. The atheists, it is true, deny God ; but divines defame him. Which is the worst of the two? Of all fools, the most presumptuous, and at the same time the most trifling, are such pretenders ; they have at every step recourse to flimsy distinctions, and dogmatical affirmations, the last retrenchments of obstinacy. In their owning the existence of God, is it not, only to censure his works, and the dispensations of his providence?

Besides these general invectives, this infallible reasoner says, thus—The particular catalogue of those who have had their heads turned by a preternatural fermentation of the brain, or a philosophical delirium ; who have given nonsensical paraphrases of nonsense ; who have dared, in wicked rhodomontades, to make infallible demonstrations, like the Pope's decrees ;

crees; who, as vain and audacious sophists, have in effect renounced God, as much as the rankest of the atheistical tribe; who have been licentious makers of hypotheses, and whining philosophers; who have been, in fact, mere cowardly, orthodox bullies:—these are all * beyond my present recollection.--Among the many, however, let us not forget, we shall meet with the names of all the sages of antiquity, besides those of Stillingfleet, Cumberland, Bochart, Huet, Grotius, Selden, Puffendorf, Dacier, Locke, Tillotson, &c.

But, is not this author, in reality, mad himself, when certain subjects come in his way? Incoherency, wildness, contradiction, unconnected extravagancies of fancy, often bespeak derangement of intellect. And do not metaphysics, theology, Platonic philosophy, spiritual substance, incorporeal essence, but above all, Christian divines, and the Christian system altogether, when he happens to meet with them, bring one of these fits upon him, and often set him raving for pages together? But, this sort of language is disgusting. It offends against sense, as well as against decency. One thing, indeed, it proves, namely, that the noble Lord had a very high opinion of the superiority of his own understanding,

* Bolingbroke.

derstanding, and a sovereign contempt for all those that held different sentiments from him, whether philosophers, ancient or modern, or divines ; but especially the latter.* To be more candid, however, we will allow, there is scarcely any extravagance, which some one or other of the learned has not approved and justified.—For instance, Zeno teaches us to regard nothing but ourselves ; to disregard our fellow creatures ; and to hold kindness and humanity, as weaknesses unbecoming wisdom. From each of the other wise men, similar instances might perhaps be adduced. But, are Bolingbroke himself and the very ablest of his followers any thing better than the humble echoes of these very philosophers, repeating what they find, and presenting the world with nothing more than reflected images ?

There is no acquiescing in arrogant declamation, and sublime obscurities ; nor can I look upon those who aspire to a knowledge of truth, of God, and of immortality, to be either Platonic madmen, or profane Christian metaphysicians. There is, indeed, a point or term in metaphysical science, beyond which we cannot go, without shocking common sense. If in the

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search

* Leland.

search of truth, common sense may deceive us, metaphysical speculation may lead us astray. Thus, as often as two or more metaphysical propositions, incompatible with each other, are, nevertheless, when dispassionately weighed and examined, found to be each supported by reasons of equal force, we must have recourse for a final decision to common sense. Berkley proved, by a chain of ingenious metaphysical reasoning, that we have no evidence for the existence of material beings without the mind. But, does not such subtilty wound common sense? Therefore, when the metaphysician finds his investigation terminating in results, that shock the universal and invariable dictates of common sense, he ought to renounce his undertaking. But the preference, notwithstanding, is not in all cases to be given to common sense. A philosopher may be led, by a well-connected series of abstract reasonings, to conclusions so singular, that he cannot adopt them, without shocking the common apprehension of mankind. Common sense is the rapid application of the general principles of knowledge, collected by induction, strongly felt, but indistinctly perceived; whereas speculative philosophy, or metaphysics, unfolds and demonstrates these general principles. The presumption is, therefore, in favour of metaphysics.

physics. The conclusion is, we ought to adopt in metaphysics, every proposition to which we are conducted by a well connected series of argument, however paradoxical it may appear to common sense, provided it be not really repugnant to it; and on the other hand, reject every one which cannot be reconciled with common sense, though we should be incapable of demonstrating its falsehood.

Unbelievers are of two kinds: the sober deists, who rejecting revelation, acknowledge, however, the obligations of morality, believe a providence, and expect a future retribution: and the atheists, who have neither hope nor fear, beyond the present life, deny the providence of God, and doubt, not to say worse, of his existence. The former think reverently of the moral attributes of God; and upon their notion of his attributes, build an expectation of their future existence, and look for a lot of misery or happiness in a future life, according to their deserts in this. But, the latter disclaim every thing. The atheist allows, indeed, the indispensable advantage of religion to society, and cannot deny a wholesome necessity in believing a future state, in order to our subsisting in this: yet he monstrously contends, that

if there be a Deity, he has so constituted us, as to make the belief of a lie necessary to our living together here as rational creatures ; that he hath planted in our breasts an ardent desire of an hereafter, and yet hath ordained that idea to be an illusion.

How destructive is the course of these annihilators ! They go forth on all sides, armed with fatal paradoxes, to sap the foundations of all comfort, and to eradicate the principles of virtue. How contemptuously do they deride the antiquated names of religion, and of immortal hopes ; consecrating their talents to the debasement and abolition of every thing that is held sacred by mankind ! I will not bear so hard upon them as to say, they have any real hatred to religion, or to virtue ; on the contrary, I can readily conceive, that were they banished to a country of atheists, they would, from the mere love of singularity, become believers.

In what I have said, I would not be understood to comprehend, under one common censure, the atheist and the deist. If their hypothesis be compared, it will be found that the hypothesis of the deist reaches through the intellectual and material world, with a clear and distinct light

light every where ; is genuine, comprehensive, and satisfactory ; hath nothing forced, nothing confused, nothing precarious : whereas that of the atheist is strained and broken ; dark and uneasy to the mind ; commonly precarious ; often incongruous and irrational ; and sometimes plainly ridiculous. Hence I affirm, that no man can have a system of thoughts reaching through nature, coherent and consistent in every part, without a Deity for its basis ; and that if the system of the theist be attended with difficulties, that of the atheist abounds with absurdity.

LETTER LXVI.

FULLY convinced as I am of the existence of a Supreme, all-perfect Being, seriously as I adore his majesty, bless his goodness, and resign myself chearfully to his providence ; I should yet be sorry to rest my conviction on the authority of any man, or of all mankind ; since authority cannot be, and evidence is, the sole proper proof on such an occasion. And yet, he who shall traverse this habitable earth, with all those remote corners' of it reserved for the discovery of these later ages, may find some nations without cities, others without schools, houses, clothing, coin, but none without their God. They may, and do vastly differ in their manners, institutions, customs ; but all of them agree, in having some deity to worship. It may, indeed, be said, some few tribes have been found without a notion of God. Granted. But, can this be urged any more against the common and usual order of ideas, than certain anomalous phænomena may to prove, that these are irregularities in the laws of nature ? Is it reasonable to judge of the nature of
of

of any species from such particular instances as in their kinds are monstrous? *Specimen naturæ cujuslibet, à natura optima sumendum est.**

The cause must be as universal as the effect. If, therefore, this belief has been one and constant in all places, and in all times, then must the cause of it be so likewise. Hence it seems conformable to reason, that he who is the great Creator of the world, should have stamped upon the face of nature signatures of himself, which all can read and understand. It is no just exception against such a notion, that it is promoted by the experience and instruction of others; because mankind are naturally designed for social life, and to be of utility to one another, by mutual conversation. And without this advantage, whereby they communicate their thoughts and opinions to one another, it could not otherwise be, but that men must be strangely ignorant, and have many wild and gross apprehensions of such things as are in themselves very plain and obvious, and do appear so to others. †

Among those animated beings, to whom the Author of Nature has given sense, and the strongest

* Cicero.

† Bishop Wilkins,

strongest intellectual powers, there have been at all times many, who not only saw like the rest, what was visible, but who discovered, by reflection, what was intelligible, and yielded to the testimony God has given of himself. Thus, genuine theism could be at no time confined to any one people, but must have been at different times, and in different places, discovered, established, corrupted, lost, and renewed, according to the vicissitudes of human affairs.* The order and arrangement of nature; the curious adjustment of final causes; the plain use and intention of every part and organ; all these speak, in the clearest language, an intelligent cause or author. The heavens and the earth join in the same testimony. The whole chorus of nature raises one hymn to the praises of its Creator. The atheist alone disturbs this general harmony. He alone starts abstruse doubts, cavils, and objections. He alone asks what is the cause of this cause? I answer him, I know not, I care not; that concerns not me. I have found a Deity; and here I stop my inquiry. Let those go farther, who think they are wiser, or more enterprising.†

Yet

* Bolingbroke.

† Hume.

Yet, let me ask those who reject the aid of an intelligent cause, if they have ever been able to offer any tolerable hypothesis for explaining how plants and animals have been formed. In these beings, matter and the laws of motion, are able to do nothing. There is no such thing as equivocal generation. The sun, and earth, and water, and all the powers of nature in conjunction, cannot produce any thing endued with even so much as vegetable life. Hence all plants and animals were originally the work of an intelligent being ; or they have been derived one from another in an eternal succession, by an infinite progress of dependent causes ; which is a positive absurdity.* The combination of all the elements cannot, without the seed, produce an organized being ; no, not even a blade of grass. It might as well be asserted, that this terraqueous ball could give existence to the *Georgium Sidus*.

Against the being of a God, there can be no possible demonstration, nor any appearance of one ; excepting, either that the idea of a first cause is in itself absurd ; which cannot be, unless the idea of a cause, and consequently of an effect, be also in general, and in every supposable

* Clarke.

able instance absurd ; or, that there are some undeniably appearing circumstances in the actual make and frame of things, which are absolutely inconsistent with their having an intelligent and voluntary cause of their existence ; or lastly, that a creative power is contrary to reason. But, upon the principles of atheism itself, this cannot be urged, because there is nothing so imperfect in respect to contrivance, operation of power, or exertion of goodness, but what may have some cause exactly proportioned to it. The only remaining difficulty is, that creation is repugnant to reason. This difficulty seems in a great measure to be founded in the ambiguous and equivocal sense of the word Creation ; which has been improperly and loosely defined to be the making of things out of nothing ; whereas, it is nothing else but the first communication of dependent existence ; nothing else, but the production of what could not exist of itself, as having no necessary intrinsic spring and source of being ; which notion contradicts no dictates of reason, nor any conclusions drawn from obvious and allowed principles. The whole amount of an atheist's objections rises to this only, that *he* does not comprehend the affair, and that therefore it is incomprehensible.

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If the idea of a Deity, or first cause, be not in itself a contradiction, what can there be, in any of the visible appearances of things, to induce any man to imagine, it is not the truest and most natural account of the origin and structure of the world? A system, through the whole of which there appears to be the deepest design, and most curious and inimitable skill displayed, must, with vastly greater probability, be supposed to be the effect of intelligence, of some vital, contriving, and wisely disposing principle, than to proceed from any blind inanimate causes. There are many most important and strong arguments, to confound and overturn all atheistical pretences, and enforce the belief of an eternal first cause, and maker of the world. We know by intuition, from certain deductions of reason, external sense, and credible testimony, that there are various orders of being existing. We likewise know, with demonstrative and infallible certitude, that no one individual of these could give being to itself, because that would be supposing it to act before it existed. Something then there must be, which could not be the cause of its own existence; and how came it to be? Of this no other possible account can be given, but either, that there has been an infinite series of derived and independent effects without
a cause;

a cause ; or that there is an original and efficient cause of all other beings. The first is in terms a contradiction ; and, of course, the latter must be admitted, there being no medium between a cause and no cause.

The atheist may weakly say, the whole chain of effects exists necessarily. But what reason has he for maintaining this hypothesis ? Nothing can be a sufficient reason, but that it is a contradiction in nature to suppose them not to be. And why a contradiction in nature ? The only answer which an opposer of the Deity can make to this is, because they now are ; which can yield no manner of satisfaction, unless whatever is, necessarily is, which is begging the question. The existence of God is demonstrated by the existence of man. The effect indicates the cause. We are ourselves the most convincing proofs, that an omnipotent Power has created and regulated nature. Every where this almighty power is to be traced. It existed before we were born. It will continue its operations, after the tomb shall have received us into its silent bosom. Were it not for this, I should consider virtue as a name ; conscience as a prejudice ; and nature as a phantom.

From

From eternity there must have been something, because there is something now; the eternal being must be an intelligent being, because there is intelligence now; for no man will venture to assert that non-entity can produce entity, or non-intelligence, intelligence: and such a being must exist necessarily, whether things have been always as they are, or whether they have been made in time; because, it is no more possible to conceive an infinite, than a finite progression of effects, without a cause. Thus, the existence of a God is demonstrated; and cavil against demonstration is impertinent. He who refuses to submit to this demonstration, has but one short step more to make, in order to arrive at the highest pitch of absurdity; for surely there is but one remove between a denial of the existence of God, and a denial of our own existence. *

The man who is neither moderated by reason, nor fixed by faith, but is blindly impelled to a dark and empty abyss, must be wretched in the extreme. And thus, says Bacon, I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without mind. Atheism must rather be in the

* Bolingbroke.

the life, than in the heart of man. Against atheists, the very savages take part with the wisest and most subtle philosophers. They have their particular gods. "Atheists," continues this great man, "I cannot but look upon as hypocrites, who are ever handling holy things, but never feeling them." In a word, as atheism is in all respects hateful, so is it particularly in this, that it deprives human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty. It is an atrocious attempt to endeavour to lessen the motives of right acting, or to raise a suspicion concerning their solidity. The tempers and dispositions of mankind are so extremely different, it seems necessary they should be called into action by a variety of incitements. Thus, while some are willing to wed virtue for her personal charms, others are engaged to take her for the sake of her expected dowry: and since her followers and admirers have so little to hope from her in present, it were pity to reason them out of any imagined advantage in reversion. But we are told, nothing has been more pernicious than that extravagant system, which has elevated an imaginary monarch over nature: for him mankind neglect experience; they despise themselves; they distrust their proper powers; cease to labour for their own ease and comfort; become trembling slaves, under the

the caprices of an ideal tyrant ; and, in short, fall into every thing that is contemptible and base. *

But whence the universal, though variously felt belief of a Divinity ? It must have some origin. It cannot proceed from matter, for matter cannot think. It cannot proceed from common appearances in nature, for common appearances in nature give, to the uncultivated mind, a stronger conviction of matter than of spirit. Whence then could it have arisen ? Learned men have determined, that it must have come into the world by revelation, or, that from being natural and obvious, it has forced itself upon the mind. The former conclusion has been most generally acquiesced in. And whoever will consider, how unapt for speculation rude and uncultivated minds are, will, perhaps, hence alone be strongly inclined to believe it to be true. For with regard to the general race of men, there are most undoubtedly many first truths, more immediately obvious to the human capacity, and which it conceives more quickly and easily, than the knowledge of God,

But if we are even denied a revelation, why may not we believe this notion to have been originally stamped upon our souls by God himself, in like manner as multitudes of other verities are? The unarmed, untaught savage, who hears the approaching growl of the monster of the forest, instinctively knows and pursues his way of safety. The trembling dove, though the merciless hawk is scarcely within ken, bends to the earth, and seeks her shelter in the covert. The fleet antelope, that nearly outstrips the wind, starts at the appearance of the tyger, but in the velocity of speed is satisfied of security. If similar propensities, with an aptitude of admission for the whole circle of moral and physical truths, be implanted in us, why may not the idea of divinity be given to us in the same manner? We had it not from without: man could not form it of himself; and no one will contend, there can be any other power capable of thus enlightening us, but God himself. Go back, however, into the darkest periods of antiquity; search among the wrecks of nations; demand of the first people of the earth, to whom were their vows, to whom were their sacrifices offered? To whom were reared the altars of the Scythians, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the

the Greeks, and the Romans? Can we trace any nation without a God, or any society of men without a temple?

Mankind could not, at all times, have been universally deceived. The light of truth did not burst upon our heads but yesterday. Is a sad, a meagre group of atheists exclusively gifted with the power of irradiating not only the present world, but of dispersing the debasing clouds of ignorance of preceding ages? It is a bold pretension. But terror and apprehension, not reason or revelation, it is said, originally imagined God. I deny the position, as much as I do, that religion was the fabric of tyranny and imposition. Every age, and every history, exhibits the belief of a God. There is neither name nor period, transmitted to us of those, who could first have forged the tale of a divine imposition. The God of Nature had altars of gratitude, before guilt had occasioned apprehension. The prayers of mankind had ascended to their Maker, before there were thrones, or hierarchies, or tyrants. The idea of a Divinity is not then the fruit of ignorance. Kepler, Newton, Euler, Bernouilli, in the sublime revolutions of the heavenly bodies, have not discovered the finger of chance, nor the fortuitous coincidence of hazard.

zard. The very thunder, which rolls over the grave of the atheist, shews to the living, there is still a power which preceded and survives the ruins and the vicissitudes of mortality.

But allowing that terror and apprehension did first give the idea of God, are not terror and apprehension natural, and originally implanted in our nature by the Being that formed us? But, societies, it is said, have been found without any religion, without any idea of a supreme ruler of the world. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the deformed; these are not types of the creature man in his most perfect state. The seed of the garden is not without its principle of vegetation, because it is not yet sown in the garden, and cultivated. The infant in the nurse's arms cannot reason and combine like the mathematician. The universality of religion, or if it must be so, the universality of its causes, terror and apprehension, prove at least that the same sentiment has been alike imprinted upon the minds of all mankind. Who engraved this upon their hearts? Was it accident, or was it hazard? Neither. Who was it then? We are told it was the rulers of nations, and priests, the abettors of tyranny. But did it not exist before either rulers or priests? If the idea of God had
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not existed before terror and apprehension, how could it have found its way into the mind of man? Can we fear that of which we have no idea? The laws of nature were firmly established, before the laws of legislators were conceived.

Some philosophers have said, the world was made by chance. But what precise ideas have we of chance? None; unless chance be an unknown cause; and to judge of the effects that may be produced by an unknown cause, is to judge of a chimera. What should we say to a person, who would attempt to prove we do not exist, because it is impossible for us to conceive the origin of our existence? I am at a loss, indeed, to answer such sophistical refinements; but I have seen men shut up in confinement for less extravagant notions. It is certain, however, that by metaphysical evidence, we can only demonstrate what is inherent in ourselves, and nothing of the existence of things of a different nature. Wherefore, unless we conceive of God as comparatively relative to ourselves, it will be impossible to find a metaphysical demonstration of the existence of God. It will not, indeed, be the less really evident on that account, since nature has placed in us other principles of evidence, which we cannot disavow, without renouncing common

sense, and the sentiments nature has dictated to all mankind, *

Nothing can be true of mind, it is certain, any more than of body, that is repugnant to experiment and observation; and an intellectual hypothesis, which is not supported by intellectual phænomena, is as preposterous as a corporeal hypothesis, which is not supported by corporeal phænomena. Bolingbroke says, by metaphysics, or by reasoning *a priori*, we can gain no knowledge whatever; that all our knowledge is to be acquired only by a contemplation of the works of God, or by reasoning *a posteriori*; that it is from the constitution of the world alone, and from the state of mankind in it, we can acquire any ideas of the divine attributes, or a right to affirm any thing about them. Clarke also acknowledges the intelligence of the Divinity cannot be demonstrated, except *a posteriori*; but, that the existence of a Supreme Being, self-existent, eternal, and one, may be demonstrated *a priori*.

It is in fact true, that the specific attributes from which we deduce all our knowledge of the nature and will of God, are formed on analogy,
and

* Buffier.

and bear relation to ourselves. But, on that account, they are not the less real or essential. We see the light of the sun less perfectly in the orb itself, than in the rainbow. There it is one uniform perfect blaze of glory: here we separate its perfection into its various attributes of red, yellow, &c. Just so it may be supposed of the Divine Nature. It is one simple individual perfection in the Godhead himself; but, when refracted and divaricated, in passing through the medium of the human mind, it becomes power, justice, mercy, which are all separately and adequately represented to the understanding.* A feeling mind, however, can be but little satisfied with the cold idea of a geometrical God, who merely adjusts all the parts of matter, and keeps the elements in order. †

Wherever order is discovered, there also must be found intelligence which is the author of it. This intelligent cause, therefore, I call God. If it be pretended that as the laws of motion are necessary in nature, the order that actually subsists, must have thence necessarily ensued: in answer to this, I say, the actual laws of motion in nature are not necessarily produced but by the will of an intelligent cause; for without this, as
I 4 matter

* Divine Legation.

† Pascal.

matter is in itself indifferent to all degrees and directions of motion, how could it have been determined to any motion? Again, as the order found in the universe in general, and in man in particular, is equally admirable, estimable, good, and useful, their author must have something in him still more admirable. The substance, or essence of this self-existent, or necessarily existing being, we have no idea of; neither is it at all possible for us to comprehend it. But nothing can be more weak, than for an atheist on this account to deny the being of God. His imperfect and finite understanding cannot even carry him to a knowledge of the essence of the most familiar things. Can he tell us what is the essence of a fly?

We are informed, the primitive fathers did not believe a spirit to be immaterial, but only a thinner sort of body: and this they did not apply to the souls of men and angels only, but thought that God himself was corporeal. Tertullian says, “*Quis negabit Deum corpus esse, etsi Deus spiritus est?*” and again, “*Nihil incorporale nisi quod non est.*” And St. Hilary, even in the fourth century, affirms, there is nothing but what is corporeal. And it is very probable in interpreting some words of our Saviour, they

they thought a spirit was a thinner sort of body, that could be seen but not felt.* But this question about the nature of God is incomprehensible. It is covered in a deep cloud from human curiosity. Nor can I conceive it otherwise, than that next to the impiety of denying his existence, is the temerity of prying into his nature and essence. Few men, we all know, are capable of profound and continued meditation. The exercise of thought, is with the most part, a very laborious business. The people, forced to work for subsistence, are commonly incapable of reflection. The great, the men of the world, the fair sex, young people, all occupied in their several pursuits, are all in the same situation. There are not ten in a million, who have even demanded of themselves what they understand by the word God, or with whom the nature of God is a problem.

Yet nothing can be more irrational, than for a man to deny the existence of any thing, because he cannot completely understand the manner in which it exists. To say we cannot have liberty, because we do not understand the manner of volition, is the same thing as to say, we cannot tell whether we see or hear, because we do not understand

* Christianity as old as the Creation.

derstand the manner of sensation. It might as well be said, that there is neither light nor colour, because we cannot hear them; nor sound nor voice, because we cannot see them. But it is asked, who made God? Why is there a God? Shall I, with humility reply, I doubt of his existence, because my imagination cannot carry me to conceive his origin? In the same strain, and on the same grounds, I might as well say, there is no man upon earth. For who made man? Why should there be man? Why, in the eighteenth century, am I in the world? Why was I not in it before? Proud, idle sophistry! Instead of demanding, why there should be a Providence, we ought rather to ask, ungrateful as we are, why we should be permitted to breathe the breath of life. *

In regarding the globe on which we tread, whichever way we turn our eyes, we discover either some simple elements, or compound bodies, which have all different operations. What the fire burns, the water extinguishes; what one wind condenses, another rarefies; what the sun hardens, the rain moistens. All which, however seemingly repugnant, conspire to produce one and the same effect. But, though the various

ous parts of the universe be kept in due order, by certain general laws, yet they could never be created, or receive their forms, by any effect of the simple laws of motion. It is as impossible for a sun, by any incrustation whatever, to become an earth like ours ; or for an opaque body, by its being divested of its surface, to become a sun, as it is impossible for a stone, by any combination of motions, to be converted into a man, or a man into a tree. Such metamorphoses as these would appear absurd and ridiculous in Ovid himself. However, for once let us allow these gentlemen, who cannot perceive the hand of the Almighty in any of the works of Nature ; who at best imagine that all things were produced by motion impressed upon matter ; let us allow them to form the earth after their own model ; let us indulge them with a sufficient quantity of matter to work upon, a circular motion, and as much time as they can reasonably desire for the execution of their design. Let them take their choice of laws, from either Des Cartes or Newton. In a word, let us suppose the world modelled according to their own ideas. The earth, however, will be still naked, without either verdure or inhabitants ; and, notwithstanding all their boasted mechanical motions, be nothing better than an uncomfortable

barren desart. Should the most minute plant grow in it, or the most abject worm but crawl upon it, there must be some intelligent Being, and an act of his special will, in the organization of the one, and the formation of the other. Now, if mere motion can neither produce the little ringlets or intestines of a worm, nor the vessels of the minutest plant, can any one be so absurd as to imagine, it can be at all capable of framing an uniform and habitable earth? Can mere motion adapt the beds, or strata of it, to the necessities of its inhabitants; appoint that just measure of air, water, and fire, which it requires; and plant its orbit at such a point of distance, with respect to the sun, that it shall neither be congealed by being too remote, or burnt up by a too near approach? All, then, most assuredly, was the result of deliberate counsel and design.*

A great many nations have adored the sun. The sensible effects of that star, which apparently gives animation to the world, naturally carried men to offer him their adoration. Nevertheless, entire people have abandoned that visible Divinity, for one abstract and metaphysical. "If any one shall demand the reason," says Mirabaud,

* Le Spect. de la Nat.

baud, "I will reply to him; "the God the most concealed, the most mysterious, the most unknown, must always please the vulgar, more than the one which is constantly before their eyes. Dark, unintelligible, incomprehensible cant, is essentially necessary to the priests of all religions. A clear, accurate religion, free of mystery, would be too scanty of divinity for the common herd, and would be of little or no service to the priesthood, whose interest is always, that the flock should be unacquainted with that which they profess to believe. The expounding of inexplicable points, or the rendering mystery more mysterious, is their harvest. The friend of man can never be the friend of an invisible God, who has always been the real scourge of the earth." *

It is not uncommon to see men take the privilege of saying every thing, because they have not the patience to consider any thing; and then assume the name and authority of philosophers. But, there is this mighty difference between such characters and men of real science. In the immensity of effects, for of causes he is ignorant, the true philosopher sees many he cannot in any manner account for. These, however,
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* Syst. de la Nat.

in humility, he considers as so many passages in the book of Nature, to the interpretation of which his circumscribed ability is unequal. When he cannot read, he yet ventures to suppose wisdom; for wisdom he has found in every part that has been open to him. The atheist, on the contrary, shuts his eyes to the clear pages which lie before him, and denies all, because he cannot decypher all. Is not this like saying, the labours of all the learned of all ages, are no more than sick men's dreams, and convince us of the deplorable certainty, that man possesses reason only to pursue a shadow?

None have ever attempted more to humble human pride, than these pseudo-metaphysicians; and none have ever shewn proofs of greater vanity. As poets, they have not only played with words, but they have given more serious offence, they have played with reason. I will allow, however, as indeed I have always done, that we cannot form an adequate idea of the eternal Being. There is no proportion between finite and infinite; they are altogether incommensurable. In our idea of eternity, we unquestionably confound finite with infinite; and eternity appears to be an object not barely above our comprehension, but even to involve in it a contradiction.

diction. But, from this shall we infer, there is a real contradiction in the nature of the thing? This cannot be; for something eternal must be; and the proper inference is, that the object is only disproportioned to our capacity, and that we are not able to contemplate it in a true and full light.

It is then true, that the eternity of a first Being, which is infinity with regard to duration, cannot be fully comprehended in all respects; but that all may, and should comprehend, there has existed some being from eternity. To suppose no eternity, would be to suppose something still more incomprehensible. Man is obliged by his reason to admit the existence of something he does not comprehend; he clearly conceives the necessity of this existence; but, he neither comprehends the nature of this being existing eternally, nor the nature of his eternity. He comprehends that such a thing is, not what it is. A deficiency of knowledge, or a thing unknown, never destroys, nor makes any alteration in real knowledge, or a thing known.*

But Spinoza says, that the material world, and every part of it, with the order and manner of being of each part, is the only self-existent, or necessarily

* Buffier.

necessarily existent being ; and that motion, as a dependent being, has been eternally communicated from one piece of matter to another, without having had any original cause of its being, either within itself, or without itself. *Corpus motum, vel quiescens, ad motum vel quietem determinari debuit ab alio corpore, quod etiam ad motum vel quietem determinatum fuit ab alio, & illud iterum ab alio, & sic in infinitum.**

“ Time,” says Aristotle, “ is the number of motion by before and after.” Those two parts of time are conjoined by *το νυν*, the present, as the parts of a line are by a point. All motion and mutation are in time. We are so accustomed to consider our ideas of time, with the history of what passes in it, that is, to mistake a succession of thoughts and actions for time, that we find it extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, totally to separate or distinguish them from each other ; and, indeed, had we power to effect this in our mind, all human language is so formed, that it would fail us in our expression. Yet certain it is, time abstracted from the thoughts, actions, and motions, which pass in it, is actually nothing ; it is only the mode in which some created beings are ordained to exist ; but, in it-
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* Par. 11. Prop. 13. Lemma 3.

self has really no existence at all. This may appear chimerical, but it is nevertheless true, and was long since adopted by the most celebrated philosophers of antiquity, particularly by the Epicureans. *

“The spheres were hardly put in motion,” says the mythological fiction of the Heathens, “when time was born. Eternity is an indivisible whole, which admits no numerical succession, which remains always full and entire, whether matter has existence or not.” Time, on the contrary, the idea of which cannot be disjoined from that of motion, and which enters as a constituent part in its definition, is susceptible of an infinity of divisions. We cannot conceive a body changing place, without considering at the same time the velocity with which it moves, the space it passes through, and the period it takes to accomplish its motion. These three things, then, are so intimately connected together, that one of them necessarily supposes the other two, and on their different combinations depends the whole doctrine of forces. Take away motion, and you annihilate time, which is lost in eternity.

From observing the diurnal revolution of the sun, and the various transactions which pass during those revolutions, we acquire conceptions of days ; by dividing these days, we form hours, minutes, and seconds ; and by multiplying these, months, years, and ages : then, by measuring these imaginary periods against each other, and bestowing on each distinct denominations, we give them the appearance of something real. Yesterday, which is past, and to-morrow, which is yet to come, assume the same reality as the present day ; and thus we imagine time to resemble a great book, one of whose pages is every day written upon, and the rest remain blank, to be filled up in their turns with the events of futurity ; while, in fact, this is all but the delusion of our own imaginations, and time is nothing more than the manner in which past, present, and future events succeed each other. Yet, is this delusion so correspondent with our present state, and so woven into all human language, that without much reflection it cannot be perceived, nor when perceived, can it be remedied ; nor can I, while endeavouring to prove time to be nothing, avoid treating it as something. *

There

* Soame Jenyus.

There seems to be, in the nature of things, two modes of existence; one, in which all events, past, present, and to come, appear in one view, which if the expression may be allowed, I will call instantaneous; and which, as I apprehend, constitutes eternity; the other, in which all things are presented separately and successively, which produces what we call time. Of the first of these, human reason can afford us no manner of conception; yet it assures us, on the strongest evidence, that such must be the existence of the Supreme Creator of all things; that such probably may be the existence of many superior orders of created beings; and that such possibly may be our own in another state. To existence of this kind alone can eternity belong; for eternity can never be composed of finite parts, which, however multiplied, can ~~never~~ become infinite, but must be ~~something~~ simple, uniform, invariable, and indivisible; permanent though instantaneous, and endless without progression. Time has no more a real essence, independent of thought and action, than sight, hearing, and smell, have independent of their proper organs, and the animals to whom they belong; and when they cease to exist, time can be no more. And hence the life of every man is longer or shorter, in proportion to the number of his thoughts and actions; for were it possible for a man to think and act as

much in an hour as in a year, that hour, as far as it related to him, would not only seem, but actually become a year. On the other hand, was it possible for a man totally to abstain from thinking and acting for an hour or a year, time, with regard to him, for that period, could have had no existence.*

But, the material world, let me repeat it, cannot possibly be the first and original being, uncreated, independent, and of itself eternal. For, unless it exists necessarily, by an absolute necessity in its own nature, so as that it must be an express contradiction to suppose it not to exist, it cannot be independent, and of itself eternal. For, whether we consider the form of the world, with the disposition and motion of its parts, or whether we consider the matter of it as such, without respect to its present form, every thing in it, both the whole and every one of its parts, their situation and motion, the form, and also the matter, are the most arbitrary and dependent things, and the farthest removed from necessity that can possibly be imagined. There may be a necessity of fitness, in order to well-being, but there is no necessity of nature.†.

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* Soame Jenyns. † Clarke.

In like manner as the universe proves a Creator, so does it demonstrate the *unity* of that omniscient Being by whom it was created. Had one God formed the sun, and another God the earth, as the ends and views which they proposed by these exertions of their power would be quite different, they would for ever, like the fabulous deities of Homer, be in a state of enmity, and at variance. There is, therefore, one first principle only. It must be the same Omniscient Being, who could impress upon all the parts of nature the same tendency, and cause so many different operations to produce one and the same effect. It is indeed said, that which cannot be destroyed or annihilated, could not have begun to exist; and that which could not have commenced to exist, exists from necessity, or has within itself a cause sufficient for its existence: it is then useless to search beyond nature which is known, to that which is totally unknown. Why should we recur to the inconceivable and chimerical operation, which we are to understand by the word creation? Can we conceive that an immaterial being could have drawn materiality from himself? If the creation be a deduction from nothing, must it not be conceded, that God, who has taken it from himself, must be nothing else than nothing?

We are told also, that almost all the heathen philosophers regarded the world as eternal. Ocellus Lucanus says formally, in speaking of the universe, "it has been always, and it always will be." Creation, it is said, in the sense given to it by moderns, is a theological subtilty. The Hebrew word *barab*, is rendered in Greek in the version of the Septuagint, ἐποίησεν. Grotius and Vatable assure us, that to render the Hebrew phrase properly, it must be read—When God made the heaven and the earth, the matter was unformed.—Whence we see that the Hebrew word which has been rendered to create, signifies nothing more than to form, fashion, or arrange. St. Jerom says, *creare* is the same thing as *condere*, to found, to build. The Bible does not in any part speak plainly, that the world was made from nothing. St. Justin appears to have regarded matter as eternal, since he has praised Plato for saying, that God, in the creation of the world, did nothing more than give an impulse and a fashioning to matter. It is very difficult, I will confess, not to persuade one's-self, that matter is eternal; it being impossible for the human mind to conceive there ever was a time, when there was neither space, length, breadth, nor thickness. Nature is a whole,
acting

acting or living, all the parts of which are connected to maintain action, existence, and life. Plato says, matter and necessity are the same thing, and that necessity is the mother of the world. In effect, matter acts apparently, because it exists; and it exists for action; further we cannot go. If it be demanded, how, or for what it exists? we may say, it exists necessarily, or because it holds in itself, from Providence, a sufficiency of reason for existence. In supposing it created, however, says an atheist, or produced by a being distinct from itself, and still more unknown than it is, it must always be said, that that being, whatever it be, is of necessity, or possesses in itself, a sufficiency of cause for its existence. Now, in substituting matter or nature for that being, we do nothing more than substitute an agent known, or possible to be known in some respects, to one unknown, totally impossible to be known, and the existence of whom it is impossible to shew.*

But, we have already, I hope, satisfactorily invalidated such monstrous contradictions and absurdities; and therefore, lest we should get out of our depth, in sounding imaginary gulphs, wherein many of the tallest philosophers have

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been

* Syst. de la Nat.

been drowned, we shall quit this cheerless labyrinth of atheistical research. To have said nothing on the subject, would have been an omission. To say more would be both tiresome and superfluous. We shall now, therefore, consider it in another point of view: recollecting, that the good and evil of eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit, and that it would be wise for free-thinkers themselves, were they to be morally content with calm belief, and an humble adoration.

Scepticism, it is pretended, pre-supposes a profound and disinterested examination. Many, indeed, disbelieve from ignorance. But the real sceptic, it is said, has weighed and measured his reasons, which is not a trifling matter. Every mind, say the pyrrhonists, has its own telescope. That is a colossus in one man's sight, which is scarcely perceptible in another's. A reason to this man, is no reason to that. Thus differently organized, how are we to accord in sentiment? How many moral proofs must be adduced, to counterbalance one metaphysical conclusion? Are they the optics of the sceptic, or the optics of the believer, that are fallacious? If the point be undetermined, whence comes that decisive tone, which is by priests, for example, so arrogantly

arrogantly assumed? Dogmatic sufficiency is revolting. One is tempted almost to hate truth, when it is forced upon one as indubitable.

Men with ardent imaginations, and an eagerness of disposition, it is very certain, love rather to hazard a definitive choice, than to have none at all. They have not patience often to examine with tranquility and reason; they have not temper or perseverance to go into deep investigation. For how is it possible, say they, to be at rest in the midst of uncertainty? Can we be happy, not knowing who we are, whence we came, and whither we are going?—Be not hasty in your determination. If you find your reason silent, when you consult it on the nature of your situation, the fault is not yours. Nature has ordained that this knowledge should be kept from us; and therefore your chagrin is just as unreasonable, as it would be, were you to be afflicted at not having four eyes, four feet, and a pair of wings.* I will go still further. That which has never been called in question, I will allow, has never been proved; and that which has never been examined without prejudice, has never been examined. Incredulity, I know, is sometimes the vice of a weak man; and credulity, even the
failing

* *Philosophique Morale.*

failing of a man of genius. The latter, however, sees far into the regions of possibilities; the former scarcely observes those things which are about him. Hence, the one is cowardly; the other is rash. It is likewise true, that when religious men have armed against scepticism, it is possible they may, in some instances, have mistaken the real and dignified grounds of their own cause; or in some respects have run counter to them. For if it be certain, that to have truth embraced, and falsehood abandoned, nothing more is required than that they should be fully and universally known, it were fervently to be wished, that a liberal scepticism were generally prevalent. At the same time, if this be true, how can it likewise be true, that man is not unhappy but as he is acquainted with abstract speculations? Before he studies physics, we are told, he would be a metaphysician. He despises realities, and meditates on chimeras; he neglects facts, to feed himself on systems; he pretends to know his fate in another world, at the same time that he is indifferent to what would render him happy in this.*

It is indisputable, that the want of studying nature, or rather the Author of Nature, and his laws,

* Syst. de la Nat.

laws, is the cause why man crawls on in ignorance, and makes such uncertain steps towards his own felicity. Idleness feels its account, in giving itself up to the guidance of example. Passive submission to authority is less fatiguing than experimental activity. And hence the reason why tribes of people drawl on in an intellectual lethargy. But there is no lasting pleasure so sweet as contemplation; all others grow flat and insipid upon frequent use; and as we advance in life, or as we decline into age, he knows not what to do with himself, who cannot think. He saunters about from one dull business to another, to wear away time, and has no reason to value life, but because he is afraid of death. But, contemplation is a continual spring of fresh pleasures. Truth is inexhaustible; and when once you are in the right way, the farther you go, the greater discoveries you make, and the greater is your satisfaction. We are sometimes pleased and transported with ingenious inventions in mathematics, mechanics, and natural philosophy; but, these are merely momentary recreations, when compared with higher and more serious speculations.*

I am

* Burnet.

I am aware of the pleasantries which have been showered upon contemplation, and upon all sorts of metaphysical researches. We are asked, if it be possible to conceive any way of seeing without eyes, or of feeling without fingers. We are told that the sky is not blue, and that sugar is not sweet; that there is no bulk or size; that the large, the mediate, and the small, are the same ideas in every different scale, the smallest berry being in relative mensuration, no more in actual bulk than the largest planet. Nature, say mighty philosophers, has no difference of big and little; with her, large and small are the same. Every part is as large as the whole; and the whole as small as a part. Relative proportion appertains only to the mind.—To what sect of philosophy do you, Sir, belong? Do you believe the world to be solid or immaterial; composed of vortices or spheres of repulsion? Do you take the soul to be an Eolus's harp, and all the fine things in it, to be vibratiuncles? Do you think that conscience is the best teacher of the mathematics; that the theory of vision is to be known by common sense; and algebra and fluxions by intuition? Or that abstract truth and virtue could reside in Venus, or Saturn's ring, provided they had no intellectual tenement

tenement upon earth? The intelligible essences of things, say some profound investigators, are the only habitations of truth, and the only objects of knowledge; they are invisible, incorporeal, incorruptible, above all motion and mutation; making up together a being called an Infinite Reason, το ον. These intelligible species are the originals and exemplars of all created existences. Every soul is impressed with them at the commencement of its being; and they lie folded in the constitution of our minds; embryo energies, predetermined tendencies to action, arbitrary senses destined to dictate in the beautiful and moral species, which, with all the powers, faculties, and future possessions of the soul, lie hid, like the seeds of plants, till circumstances and occasions ripen and unfold these intellectual germs. Duration, vacuity, truth, possibility, and equality, causation, in short, every thing of which immensity or infinity may be affirmed, are these eternal entities we carry about with us.*

It is too true, that many metaphysicians have been extravagant; and that others have been dry, and unaccountably inattentive to the general phenomena of nature. And hence, the reason why even the mythology of the ancients has been by some

* Material World.

some studied with greater satisfaction, than some of our subtilest researches; and why the unprejudiced have said, they would rather meet with fables of the Divinity in the history of mankind, than with the reason of man in the history of the Divinity. But, sound philosophy is too sober to descend to wildenesses of imagination, and too rational to be cheated by them. The phrensies of a bold and an ungoverned fancy may be read as a philosophical romance; but they are entitled to little more attention than a mere allegory.

In almost all metaphysical speculations, also, it is to be observed, each philosopher has embraced or established some one particular and favourite system. Reason has frequently less to do in the business, than habit and inclination. A mind, for instance, naturally benevolent and kind, takes its ideas from the principles it deduces from the goodness of God, because nothing appears to it so grand, so beautiful, and so capable of conferring blessings upon the children of the earth. A mathematical or calculating mind, whose imagination is lofty and creative, likes better to borrow its principles from order and wisdom, universally diffused: while the sombre mind, misanthropic and melancholy, odious in itself, and
odious

odious to others, relishes the words destiny, fatality, necessity, hazard; and in a word, persuades itself there is neither good nor evil, virtue nor vice, in the world.

It has long been, indeed, unfortunately the practice to decry metaphysical studies, as having no fixed principles, and leading to no certain conclusions; and this, with those particularly, who deal much in experimental philosophy. Accustomed to receive no evidence but that of their senses, they think all is fallacy and illusion, if their favourite testimonials be wanting. Where they can neither see, nor touch, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell, they think themselves on fairy ground, surrounded by fleeting spectres, and fantastic dreams. But, this is a pernicious error: for in fact, the first principles even of all the arts and sciences, so far as they are objects of reasoning, are metaphysical ideas; for they cannot be denominated from those branches of knowledge, of which they are the basis, and which arise out of them. Metaphysics are the source and common parent of science; themselves not properly science, but the womb of science. They are the magazine of men's original conceptions; the general mart of truth and error, common alike to both. Hence, there should be a discrimination

crimination. No odium can in justice be cast on the source of all our knowledge, and the fountain of all our truth, because mishapen productions, crude conjectures, and chimeras, are found there also.*

From the earliest dawn of science, to the first philosophy of the present age, mankind have been perplexed with various and irreconcilable opinions. Some have been the parents, others the destroyers of systems, establishing universal doubt on the ruins of knowledge. Both have been enemies to truth. The professed disbeliever, as I have frequently said, may be deemed as great a bigot as the most orthodox zealot; for the mind which is closed against conviction, is as much bigotted, as that which pertinaciously supports false principles. God is abstracted from, and above our comprehensions; our pretensions to describe or define the Deity, are palpably absurd and ridiculous: for though a created being may ascribe to its creator the most glorious of all known perfections, yet as all its ideas of perfection are relative to itself, the attributes which human beings ascribe to God, are necessarily the superior qualities of humanity. Yet, it is impossible to deny the existence of a first cause.

The

* Young.

The constitution of the mind of man corresponds admirably to his present state. The impressions he receives, and the notions he forms, are accurately adapted to the useful purposes of life, though they do not correspond in every instance to the philosophic truth of things. That nothing can happen without a cause, is a principle embraced by all men. However ignorant of the cause, we notwithstanding conclude, every event must have a cause. Even sensation affords conviction, where reason leaves us in the dark. We perceive, we feel the proposition to be true.

Do not we ourselves act from motives? But the remarkable expression of Des Cartes is often thrown in our way: "Give me matter and motion, and I'll make you a world." Does the materialist recollect here, that there is still a third thing to be admitted, that is to say, an intelligent being; a Des Cartes, to arrange the matter given, and to regulate the motion. Des Cartes did not say, give me matter and motion, and thence will result a world. We know nothing of the laws of motion, but *a posteriori*, or from experience. No person has ever yet been able geometrically to deduce them from the essence of matter. Those philosophers, who have

attempted to establish them *a priori*, have had the mortification to find themselves contradicted by experience; while the greatest mathematicians, after the study of their whole lives, have not been able to find any other sufficient reason, than in the will of a first cause or mover.*

But, that which is of singular consideration is, that these atheists, these luminaries of the world, at all times leave us more in the dark than we were before; and that though perfectly agreeing in the principle, they yet go the most uncommon lengths in contradiction, in their attempts to sap the foundation of what is universally believed. One after another, you see them destroy their own respective systems; and the most novel have only to boast of their being still more profoundly obscure.

I am not here to be understood, as waging war with liberal and free inquiry; nor am I to be classed with those blind enthusiasts, who have called those atheists, who in reality have not been so; and who have hurried themselves into errors relative to the attributes of God, which would make them rather appear advocates of materiality, than those whom they have opposed.

* Holland.

posed. For instance, Galilæo was declared an atheist, because he proved the earth to turn upon its axis; Des Cartes, for having supported the hypothesis of innate ideas; Gassendi, for having opposed the hypothesis of innate ideas; Montagne, and Charron, were loaded with the same opprobrium, for having laughed at some scholastic absurdities. The whole protestant world are, even at this day, damned and excommunicated, for denying the infallibility of the Pope, as if they denied the infallibility of God.

But cool, deliberate, didactic atheists, are those whom every honest man is to strive against. Bolts of destroying thunder go out of their mouths. Their very breath scatters desolation around. *Fulmen ab ore venit, frondes afflatibus ardent.** As in the physical world there are sometimes deviations, so in the moral world there are sometimes atheists. But thanks be to God, it is as impossible that numbers should agree in the denial of the existence of a first cause, as it is that numbers of mothers should at the same time be delivered of double headed monsters. A people all atheists, would as much contradict the laws of nature, as a people all her-

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maphrodites.

* Ovid.

maphrodites. Nor could such a society, banishing every difference between right and wrong, and tearing up government by the roots, in any manner exist. For suppose a corner of the world allotted to them, where they are to found a colony, and fix themselves; and that their charter of legislation is prepared, and finally agreed upon. Proud of the prospect, and too vain to admit even a doubt of stability and success, they hasten to carry into execution their rational design. First of all come the renowned philosophers, of serious or of pleasant complexions, who have seen all, have examined all, and have generalized all. To them nothing is unknown. They are intimately acquainted with every thing. Next to these, and at their beck, come thousands of the lower order of *beaux esprits*, who bustle and run themselves almost out of breath, to emerge, if possible from their own native obscurity. At the heels of these, follow in wantonness and disorder, a crowd of females, more or less tinctured with the new philosophy. In their train trip their simpering gallants. Last of all succeed the licentious youth, who, to have nothing to fear, would have nothing to believe.* Can these be supposed sound and healthy props, fit for an infant society? Can any checks they
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* L'Abbe de Mably.

can impose, prevent the perpetration of crimes ? Or can an edifice, independent of God, so frightful an error in morality as well as in wise government, be looked upon as permanent and terrible ?

A celebrated Heathen still pushes this point farther. Suppose, says he, there was a race of men who inhabited the center of the earth ; who without ever having extricated themselves from their appropriated situation, had yet heard of a God ; and that at an almighty fiat, the globe should burst asunder, and they should be transplanted from their gloomy abode, to dwell on the surface of the land. What would they think, on discovering the heavens, the seas, the woods, and the mountains ? What would be their thoughts, when they should consider the alternate round of day and night, the vicissitudes of the seasons, the temperature of the winds, the glory of the solar light, and the rising and setting of the brilliant orbs of the bespangled sky ? Would they doubt of a Divinity ; or would they not conclude, that such a world was the work of an intelligent cause ? *

L 3

I will

* Cicero,

I will not go so far as to say, that promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist ; that the taking away God, but even in thought, dissolves all ; that those, who by their doctrine undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretence whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration ; and that therefore they are not to be tolerated who deny the being of God.* But this I will say, that take away from man the opinion of a rewarding, and of a chastising God, and a Sylla and a Marius will exultingly bathe their hands in the blood of their fellow-citizens ; an Augustus, an Anthony, a Lepidus, will still surpass in atrocity a Sylla and a Marius ; and a Nero, in coolness and tranquillity, will order the mother who gave him being to be murdered. † No tie can bind the atheist, if he be wicked. The monster is to himself a God. He will immolate and sacrifice every thing to his own gratification. Religion is the surest guarantee that man can have for the honesty of man. ‡

Thus, whether it be prejudice, or whether it be reason, it is a fact, that the greater part of mankind

* Locke.

† Voltaire.

‡ Montesquieu.

mankind have always firmly held that the destroying the belief of a Divinity, would be at the same moment destroying every motive to virtue, and giving a loose rein to every vicious appetite and passion. Such desperate scepticism, exclusive of the bad effects it may have on the morals, or future destiny of men, impairs even their temporal happiness, by wresting from them those hopes, which, in some situations, are their only consolation. It is a rank weed, nurtured by our vices, and cannot be plucked up as easily as it is planted. It would be, indeed, dreadful, I am sure you will allow, to be left to wander through life without a principle to direct our conduct, and to die without hope.

In whatever point of view, therefore, those men may consider themselves, who deride the opinions which their fellow-citizens hold sacred, their vanity is often overbalanced by the irksome doubts which obtrude on their own minds. Uncertainty, with respect to the most interesting of all subjects, or a fixed persuasion of annihilation, are equally insupportable to the greater part of mankind, who, sooner or later, endeavour to put in a claim for that bright reversion, which religion has promised to believers.

If the idea of annihilation has been supported without pain by a few philosophers, it is the utmost that can be said; such a state of mind can never be a source of satisfaction. People of great sensibility seldom endure it long; their fond desire of immortality overturns every fabric, which scepticism has attempted to raise in their minds; they cannot abide by a doctrine, which plucks from the heart a deeply rooted hope, tears asunder all those ties of humanity, affection, friendship, and love, which it has been the business of their lives to bind, and which they expect will be eternal. Very few are able to look with steadfast eyes on a prospect which terminates in a dismal blank.* What an ill exchange, in fact, to give up the hope of an immortal life, for the wretched eclat of a momentary admiration!

The arms of the infidel have been pushed with hardiness, intrepidity, and vigour. That they have not been successful and victorious, is because they have been directed against God. Unhappy men, who are so ingeniously industrious, to shut out for ever from their view the last, best prospect of humanity! If I reason as a natural

* Moore.

a natural philosopher, every thing appears incomprehensible to me without a God. The word nature is, to me, a mere illusion ; but an intelligent agent accounts for the little I am capable of knowing. Upon the supposition that there is a God, I conceive something ; without him, I conceive nothing. Must I not consider it a manifest contradiction, to suppose a mass of matter moved without a mover ; bestowing intelligence upon itself in man, and withholding it in a stone ; establishing relations and connections through the whole of its works, without any end or design ; and labouring blindly, with the most sublime industry ? “ The heavens declare the glory of God.”

But under this Supreme Being, we are told, we are almost all of us wretched and unjust. This is but too true, abstractedly considered ; we suffer ourselves, and we make others suffer ; such is the lot of humanity. From the days of Job, down to the present time, a very large portion of mankind have, at intervals, felt disposed to complain of their existence. But does not this strongly argue, that we consequently stand greatly in need of that consolation and hope, of which the atheistical philosophy would deprive us ?

Men,

Men, too often, take the estimate of life from themselves and their own situation. While success attends them, they think they shall never meet with disappointment ; and when disappointment stands across their way, they think they shall never more meet the smiles of fortune. While in the vigour of youth, the constitution strong, the spirits alert, the desires eager, and materials of gratification at hand, they find no fault or blemish in nature ; the world is then a glorious world, and pleasure is expected without end ; we hear of no murmurings against Providence, nor mistrust that things are not so ordered as they should be : they are rather apt to think that God winks at their miscarriages, indulges them in their follies, and suffers them to do what mischief they please to their fellow-creatures. But, when pain, disease, disappointment, or distress pinches them, the tables are turned ; they see not, nor sympathize with the enjoyments abounding elsewhere, but take their judgment of nature from that little spot, wherewith they have immediate concern ; and then doubts arise concerning the condition of things. Why was not this mischief prevented ? Where was Almighty Power, that could not, or where was infinite goodness, that would not, prevent it ? This infinite goodness ebbs and flows, according to the
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state of our minds : when we are at ease in ourselves, we find no difficulty in entertaining the idea of it; when dissatisfied with our present condition, nothing is harder for us to comprehend. Nor is this to be wondered at; for vexations of every kind give a melancholy cast to the mind, destroying the relish of those pleasures, which used to delight us before, so that we have nothing similar in our imagination, wherewith to compare the sensations of others; our only way of estimating other people's enjoyments being, by imagining ourselves in their circumstances, and reflecting on the joy we should receive therefrom. But, when the mind is disposed to care for nothing, and to find a relish in nothing, we cannot readily conceive others wishing, or caring, for what would not affect us; and therefore, being unable to form a clear conception of enjoyment, either in ourselves or elsewhere, we lose the idea of that goodness, which can be apprehended only by its effects.

There is, however, a much greater quantity of enjoyment than of sufferings upon earth: for pleasure springs from steady permanent causes, as the exertion of intellectual ability, the vigour of health, the due returns of appetite, and calls of nature to exercise and rest; but pain proceeds from

from accidents which happen rarely, or, excepting the last summons indeed, from diseases which are either slight or temporary. The good-natured man will even rejoice to see the lambs sporting in the fields, or hear the birds singing or chirping out their happiness; to behold the swallow building her nest to hatch her young; the ant, industrious and provident for future accommodation; the fly, dancing in wanton mazes; the little puceron, in water, frisking about, as if delighted all with their existence. Though he finds no pleasures within his own reach, or has lost the relish of any that may be offered him, he may reflect how many thousands are at that moment dancing and singing, marrying and given in marriage, advancing towards the accomplishment of their wishes, and pursuing all kinds of enjoyment; how many millions of animals are eating their food, providing for their accommodation, taking their pastimes, or ruminating in their lurking holes; and this consideration may alleviate his chagrin. I do not mean that this survey can stifle the smart of his own sufferings; but it may afford him this consolation, that there is an inexhaustible spring of bounty flowing incessantly upon the world; and he may thence conclude, that he himself shall partake in due measure of the stream, at
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some time or other, if not in his present, at least in some future state of being.

I have been more diffuse on this subject, than I had at first intended. But it has been unavoidable. The ground we have had to defend has been so desperately attacked, that I have found it necessary to be particular, as well as general. Moreover, fine writing has not only imposed upon men, but it has seduced many from reason, who would otherwise have gladly trodden in her steps. Pernicious doctrines, sweetly delivered, raise the delirium of fascination. The mind goes as it is led; it does not think; it delivers itself to seduction, and discards every idea of discrimination. False speculation, indeed, reduced to practice, and the sober decisions of experience, must discover its fallacy. But error glides with persuasive charms in the semblance of candour and disinterested eloquence. I trust, likewise, I have not been illiberally severe on those authors, whose works, as an honest man, I cannot, I acknowledge, but reprobate. Many of them indisputably had merit; and, in their individual capacity, might have adhered to the rigid principles of right reason, and of sound morality. No wise man will refuse them the character of genius, nor will
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any honest man be willing to rob them of their fair pretensions to ability and learning. But, to more than this they are not entitled. It is one thing to dethrone the gods of knavery and superstition; another, to dare an uplifted hand against the beneficent God of mercy and of all goodness.

LETTER LXVII.

OUR subject now calls us to another scene of things. What period shall we give to the existence of this globe? What number of years shall we suppose man to have inhabited the earth, so peculiarly appropriated to him by Providence? This is a difficult question, and the more so, as time eludes every effort of calculation, as space does every effort of research. Nothing but darkness dwells beyond the epoch given us by Moses. To conjecture when the globe was created, would be to fall into that extravagant licence which we have so frequently condemned. I yet hold it certain, that the world has been created; and that generations have existed, anterior to the very earliest periods of the Mosaic history, but have long been buried in that eternal oblivion, which attends the revolution of ages.

To delineate the withered trunk of antiquity,
is not the most amusing task we can impose
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upon ourselves. It is pleasant enough to sketch the form, and to trace the vegetation of a plant ; but the tedious detail of leaves without flowers, and of branches without fruit, would exhaust the most determined perseverance. Antiquity is a vast country, and is only separated from our own by what we carelessly term an interval of time. Some travellers, indeed, have discovered its coasts, but they have found them almost waste ; others more hazardous, have dared hypothetically to push to a more intimate acquaintance ; but they have encountered with nothing better than the dismal rubbish of former magnificence, or with phantoms and illusions of no definite description. To explore here, is to walk among ruins. The eye can scarcely discern any thing but marks of desolation. The curtain has dropped, and the splendour has passed away.

But the patient investigator, like the diver, may, by plunging into the depth of things, bring into light some little proofs of the existence of what may long have been buried from general observation. Antiquity is to us, what the whole volume of nature was to antiquity. Mighty revolutions have happened in the universe. How awfully astonished are we at contemplating the vicissitudes

The transient glory of this habitable world has well been compared to vanity. How clearly we perceive that by the force of one element breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing; all that we admired and adored before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated or vanished! Where are now the great empires of the world? They are wiped away from the face of the earth, and are buried in perpetual oblivion. Here stood the Alps, a prodigious range of stone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries. Here stood the African mountains, and Atlas with his top above the clouds: there was frozen Caucasus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia: and yonder, towards the north, stood the Riphæan hills, clothed in ice and eternal hoar. All these are vanished, dropt away, and melted into nought, as the snow upon their heads. * History, indeed, is as a ship floating down the stream of time, fraught and replete with the precious cargo of knowledge. Unfortunately, however, the ship has suffered shipwreck. Some fragments of its bill of lading are come to hand; some parts of the drifted wreck are thrown upon the coasts; but nothing more.

We are now about to re-adventure into a perilous sea, and to undertake a long, and a hazardous voyage. We may penetrate into the darkness of antiquity, but shall we flatter ourselves that our little discoveries will carry conviction? The regions through which we are to pass, are inhabited by phantoms and strange forms; and many false lights are held out, which may draw us into vortices of inextricable danger. The curiosity of the philosopher will not, perhaps, even follow us in our wearisome researches. We may labour for our toil, and at length only derive a painful amusement from a pursuit which promises no laurels. For who can entirely draw aside the veil of antiquity, encumbered as it is, with the weight of ages? Or who can lift even a small part of it without encountering a multitude of difficulties?

It was remarked by Selden, that the critics of his day were so unaccountably fastidious, they would scarcely allow any nation their first supposed author's name; "for instance," says he, "not Italus to the Italian; not Hispalus to the Spaniard; not Scota to the Scot; nor Romulus to the Roman." Had he lived till now, he would have found still more formidable scepticism. For men, who dare to step only a little
beyond

beyond the common boundaries allotted to history, are accused of turning away sullenly from the light, and of wrapping themselves up in the gloom of their own legendary annals: or as Gibbon expresses it, speaking of Ireland, a people dissatisfied with their present condition, grasp at any vision of their past or future glory. Yet have not the French insisted upon their Francus, the English upon their Brutus, the Danes upon their Danus, the Goths upon their Gothus, the Saxons upon their Saxo? All these, indeed, may have been imaginary. Nations, like individuals, are proud of their genealogy. And it is very certain, it is with bodies of people, as with particular persons, that they are commonly ignorant of their own births and infancies; or if they do know any thing of their original, they are beholden to the accidental records that others have kept of it. I have not this, however, at my outset, to apprehend, for I have no such family pretensions to insist upon. Yet the story I have to trace, connected with its collateral branches, is, although withered in its trunk, peculiarly interesting. The Scythiac is that which I have to commence with; and this, because it is the oldest concerning which we have either history or tradition; because it took in the greatest part of the ancient world; because it exhibited the

most powerful emigrations, revolutions, and conquest; but more particularly, because from its institutions, more or less adopted, the spirit of Asia at this moment animates Europe.

Epiphanius is of opinion, that the Scythian monarchy began soon after the flood, and continued to the captivity of Babylon; he says farther, "That the laws, customs, and manners of the Scythians were received by other nations as standards, and that they were the first after the flood, who attempted to reform mankind. "Scythæ ipsi perpetuo ab alieno imperio," says Justin, aut intacti, aut invicti manserunt; Darium regem Persarum turpi ab Scythiâ summoverunt fugâ; Cyrum cum omni exercitu trucidarunt; Alexandri Magni ducem Zophyrna pari ratione cum copiis universis deleverunt; Romanorum audivere sed non sensere arma." This is a character unparalleled, and which we cannot in reason suspect, as it comes from a Roman author, who seldom bestows too large encomiums on barbarous nations. But Japhet, the son of Noah, we are told, peopled the shores of the Wolga to the north of the Caspian in the latitude of about fifty degrees, and in the most southern, and the most elevated part of Siberia. Turk, his son, succeeded him; and this is the
traditionary

traditionary root of the nation called Turks or Tartars, the Tartars being in effect a branch of the same stock ; Tartar, and Mogul or Mongol, being lineal descendants from Turk.* Moreover Sir William Jones farther informs us, that the genuine traditional history of the Tartars or Scythians, in all the books that he has inspected, seems to begin with Oghuz, nearly three thousand years before Christ.“ And here,” says he, “ might not Ogyges be etymologically derived from Oghuz ; as Atlas might be derived from Altai, or the golden mountain of Tartary ?

In the early ages of mankind, every mountain appears to have been esteemed holy. Eminencies being lonely and silent, were deemed happily circumstanced for contemplation and prayer. Raised above the world, men fancied they were brought into the vicinity of the powers of the air, and of the Deity who resided in the higher regions. But their chief excellence, in the opinion of a learned mythologist, was the Omphi or Amphi, the oracle of Ham, expressed *ομφη* by the Greeks, and interpreted *Θεια κληδων*, which was esteemed a particular revelation from heaven.† But from the prevalent idea, that the waters had covered the earth, and of course that

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* Hist. Gen. des Tartares.

† Bryant.

the most elevated parts must have been the soonest inhabited, came the more universal opinion, that such high places were the most favoured by the Divinity, and consequently, that they were the fittest for temples, and other sacred edifices : and hence the reason why most part of the sanctuaries of the ancients were upon hills and mountains, and that those hills and mountains were held in such peculiar veneration. *

It is a fact, that the nearer we approach those countries, which were once inhabited by the immediate children of Noah, the greater we find the degree of perfection in the state of the sciences and arts : and on the contrary, that the remoter we draw from them, the greater the mental incapacity, and the more unequivocal the disability, and the ignorance of mankind. The Scythians had not only historical and traditionary evidence to build their fabric of seniority upon, but they had also strong physically local circumstances, which belonged to them, and to them alone. For instance, if all parts of the globe were originally conjoined, and formed one complete whole ; if water resided for any length of time upon it, and at length ran off ; or if fire was

was its spring or formator; in either case the Scythians had the plea of superior antiquity, and that from the elevation of their country. For supposing the waters to have covered the earth, Scythia must have been the soonest freed from them: supposing the operations of fire, it must have been the soonest cooled, and of course the soonest fitted for life and vegetation.

Scythia was situated on the northern parts of Europe and Asia. The most northern were uninhabited, on account of the extreme coldness of the climate. The more southern in Asia that were inhabited, were distinguished by the name of Scythia *intra et extra Imaum*. The boundaries of Scythia were unknown to the ancients, as no travellers had penetrated beyond the vast tracts of land which lay at the north, the east, and the west. Scythia, however, comprehended the modern kingdoms of Tartary, Russia in Asia, Siberia, Muscovy, the Crimea, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, the northern parts of Germany, Sweden, Norway, &c. How far it stretched to the eastward, we shall have presently occasion to enquire.

Scythia proper is the most elevated country of the world, or at least of what is called the

Old Continent. It proudly raises itself above the rest of the earth. It is a country more than three miles above the level of the sea, and is rested, as it were, on the summit of mountains. The other parts of the globe decline from it in regular gradation. It is the great reservoir of water for the most considerable part of Asia. To the south, you have, among other rivers, the Indus, the Ganges, the Burampooter, the Ghoango or Yellow River; to the north, the Oby and the Irtiz, the Jeninea and the Lena. These all stream from this elevated country. Here, however, as every where else, there are inseparable contrasts. Some parts are arid, comfortless, desert, and barren; others the richest and most luxuriant that imagination can conceive. Some are denied the blessing of running water, others have it in abundance. Where is there a more fertile country, than the valley which is bounded by China, and by the mountains of Thibet, a valley six hundred leagues in length, and four hundred leagues in breadth? Where is there a finer climate, or a more productive soil, than the vast regions of the Mongols and Calmucks? *

But

* Hist. des Voyages.

But it would be endless to range over this immense Scythiac dominion. One thing, however, is necessary to be remarked. If these vast solitudes, at this hour, possess an extraordinary degree of fruitfulness, what must they not have possessed, when they were cultivated and enriched by the labours of millions. When they were called the *nursery of irresistible legions*, the *fountain of the human race*? Cashmir, Bootan, Nassal, Thibet, even China itself, would lose its celebrated fertility, were it to be abandoned by its inhabitants. The southernmost ridge of the Bootan Mountains rises near a mile and a half perpendicular above the plains of Bengal, in an horizontal distance of only fifteen miles; and from the summit, the astonished traveller looks back on the plains, as on an extensive ocean beneath him. Further on is a chain of mountains still higher than the other. It is a continuation of the mountains Emcdus and Paropamisus of the ancients; sometimes by the moderns, erroneously called Caucasus. In short, the country of Thibet is altogether one of the highest in Asia, it being a part of that elevated tract, which gives rise not only to the rivers of India and China, which I have mentioned, but also to those of Siberia and Tartary: for, if we examine the map of Asia, we shall find that
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most of those capital rivers rise between the thirty-first and forty-seventh degrees of latitude, and between the seventieth and ninety-seventh degrees of longitude; whence they run in every direction to the sea, as the Rhine, Rhone, Danube, and Po, do from the Alps. *

The ancient oriental Scythians are not indeed accurately to be traced, either in regard to locality, knowledge, or science. The Greeks and Latins, though they were much nearer to this powerful people than we are, yet confessed the impracticability of the research, and the ignorance in which they were involved concerning them. To the northward, however, in the neighbourhood of the Caspian, I must remark to you, there are still existing monuments, which clearly prove those regions formerly to have been inhabited by a polished and a lettered people, who traded with the Hindoos, and the Chinese, even considerably before the Christian æra. † Pallas tells us of the remains of an ancient people he discovered on the banks of the Jenisca, in the neighbourhood of Krasnojarsk, latitude fifty-five degrees. In the mountain of Schlangenberg or Serpents, he found mines, with copper tools and other instruments, wrought with extraordinary skill.

* Rennell.

† Table Chronol. lib. i.

skill. In the plains and mountains of Irtisch, the sepulchres were found to contain knives, poignards, and the pointings of arrows, and all of copper. The tombs near Krasnojarsk were found also to contain ornaments of gold, elegantly designed, and well finished. In short, we can actually trace, not only from what he says, but from other evidences, that the east was for ages civilized, cultivated, and at the summit of wealth and consideration, while Athens was scarcely a village, or Rome to be distinguished from the other hamlets of Italy. Even China itself, that great empire, which in name is known to every one, but which has scientifically been explored by few, is not called China by the Chinese themselves. The name is borrowed from the Hindoos, or a still more early people, who denominated it Maha-tchin, or the great Tchin.*

In the thirteenth book of the Iliad, Jupiter turns away his eyes from the bloody fields of Troy, to the plains of Thrace and Scythia. In the contemplation of the Greeks and Persians, the real geography of Scythia was bounded on the east by the mountains of Imaus; while their distant prospect of the extreme and inaccessible parts

* Histoire des Huns.

parts of Asia was clouded by ignorance, or perplexed by fiction. But those inaccessible regions were the ancient residence of a powerful and civilized nation, says Gibbon, which ascends by a probable tradition above forty centuries, and which is able to verify a series of near two thousand years, by the perpetual testimony of accurate and contemporary historians. The original seat of this nation appears to have been in the north west of China, in the provinces of Chensi and Chansi. From the mouth of the Danube to the sea of Japan, the whole longitude of Scythia, is about a hundred and ten degrees, which in that parallel are equal to more than five thousand miles. The latitudes cannot be so easily, or so accurately measured ; but from the fortieth degree, which touches the wall of China, we may securely advance above a thousand miles to the northward, till our progress is stopped by the excessive cold of Siberia. * In corroboration likewise, Sir William Jones affirms it to be proved by the clearest evidence, that a powerful monarchy was established in Iran, long before the Assyrian government ; that the language of the Persian empire was the mother of the Sanscreet, and consequently of the Zend and Parsi, as well as of the Greek, Latin, and Gothic ;
and

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

and that we discover in Persia, at the earliest dawn of history, the three distinct races of men who have been in possession of India, Arabia, and Tartary. "These three races," continues this profound scholar, "migrated from Iran, as from their common country; and thus the Saxon chronicle I presume from good authority, brings the first inhabitants of Britain from Armenia; while a late very learned writer concludes, that the Goths or Scythians came from Persia; and another contends with great force, that both the Irish and Old Britons proceeded severally from the borders of the Caspian: a coincidence of conclusions from different media, by persons wholly unconnected, which could scarcely have happened, if they were not grounded on solid principles." And what is still more remarkable, this great orientalist maintains that it is proved, (as far as such a question admits of proof) that the Hindoos and Chinese, and even the Japanese, were originally of this same people, but having been separated near four thousand years, have retained few strong features of their ancient consanguinity. *

But we are told that the want of seas in the interior parts of Asia, as Siberia and great Tartary,

* Asiatic Researches.

tary, as well as in the interior parts of Africa, is a cause why these countries must be rendered almost uninhabitable, and is a circumstance which furnishes a strong prejudice against the opinion, that these countries were the original habitations of mankind. For is it not, we are asked, by the vicinity of seas and rivers, that the cold of the higher latitudes, and the heat of the lower are moderated? * We have already discussed the point at large, both as it regards the state of the atmosphere, as resting upon a widely extended, though elevated country, and as it regards that which rests upon an adventitiously insulated mass, such as Mont Blanc. But one word more upon the subject may not be amiss, and particularly in this place.

“ We halted,” says De Saussure, “ in our ascent of Mont Blanc in 1787 about one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five fathoms above the level of the sea, which is ninety fathoms higher than the Peak of Teneriffe. The rarity of the air was here very soon experienced. The robust mountaineers who accompanied me, found it extremely difficult to work even at digging out the snow for a place of shelter for us. They were obliged to relieve each other incessantly. Myself, who am so much accustomed to the air of mountains, that I in general feel myself better
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* Kirwan.

in that air, than on the plains, was exhausted with fatigue in making the most common observations only with my meteorological instruments. This indisposition produced in us a most parching thirst. We afterwards ascended higher, however; but when we approached the top, the rarity of the air diminished our strength with an alarming rapidity. I could not, for one, advance above fifteen or sixteen paces without stopping to take breath, and I every now and then felt a faintness coming on, which obliged me to sit down. In proportion as I recovered my breathing, indeed I found my strength renewed. But this was not of long continuance; nor indeed could it; for the air had not much more than *one half* of its ordinary weight, and that weight was to be supplied by the frequency of inspiration. This frequency accelerated the motion of the blood, and so much the more, as the arteries were not counteracted externally by that degree of pressure which they generally sustain. We were, consequently, all in a febrile state. We could not eat. But the height at which the indisposition commenced, I found to be different, as our constitutions differed. I found myself, for instance, well at one thousand nine hundred fathoms, or nearly two miles and a quarter above the level of the sea; but I began to feel uneasy as I proceeded to rise higher. On

the summit of this mountain, which is fifteen thousand nine hundred and twenty-five feet above the level of the sea, * it required half an hour to make water boil with the same lamp, which at Geneva required only fifteen or sixteen minutes, and on the sea-shore only twelve or thirteen minutes. A pistol fired, did not make a greater report than a small Indian cracker in a room. †

The habitable plains of Scythia, however, we find to be still more elevated than this very dreary and hazardous pinnacle of Mont Blanc. But, as I formerly explained in regard to the valley of Quito, how the general elevation of these plains prevents any alteration of temperature, or any diminution of fertility, even corn is found to grow spontaneously in Scythia. This is a curious fact; and were there no other, would warrant us in believing Scythia to have been the first residence of man, after the calamity of the deluge. Linnæus, indeed, supposes Siberia to have been the country whence the people of the earth descended after the flood; and the reason he gives, is, that Siberia is the only known country, which produces without cultivation the vegetables necessary for the nourishment of

• Sir George Shuckburgh. † De Saussure.

of the human species. He supports this opinion, by saying, that many of our plants, which were unknown to the ancients, are indigenous and wild in Siberia: nor were they cultivated in Europe till the invasion of the Goths or Scythians, who introduced them with other good things among us. Linnæus adds also, after M. Heinzelmänn, that wheat and barley spring up without culture, or without being sown, in Muscovite Tartary, and that the inhabitants of Siberia make a bread of rye, which grows spontaneously there. Before these discoveries, the parent country of corn was never known. It is not a production of our climate. It is not a native of the east or west. Would it not seem then to belong as naturally to Scythia, as the coffee does to Arabia, and as the spice does to the Moluccas? The prodigious quantity of nitre, universally found in Tartary, is likewise a strong proof of former population. It is from animal substances alone that nitre is generated. Nitre, therefore, as demonstratively indicates the habitations of men, as banks of shells do the habitations of oysters.

But, why are there no remains of the Scythiac nations in Scythia? Why, let me ask, are there no remains of the city of Troy? Even the ruins of that celebrated neighbour of Scamander

have disappeared. Earthquakes, and other disasters, had changed the whole face of the banks of the Xanthus, even in the days of Herodotus. But, the true reason why the great stock of the Scythians is exhausted is, that China, India, Persia, Asia Minor, and all Europe, have drained it of its inhabitants. Zingis Cawn, the Turks of Constantinople and Tamerlane, were the last of the very formidable shoots of that mighty trunk. Are the Carthaginians to be traced, who lived but the other day? I do not pretend to say, that the Calmucks of the present hour, are the descendants of the most ancient and the most enlightened part of mankind. But, though we cannot find astronomers and philosophers among them, their country might nevertheless have been the primitive seat of the race of man; and it might have given language and arts to the rest of the world. Has not Latium done the same to every part of Europe, to America, and to various parts of Africa and Asia? Yet the Campagna of Rome, which was the ancient Latium, scarcely possesses at this moment a hut, or a being who can read or write.

The Scythians, as far as we can learn, had lost all resemblance of their origin. Speaking of these people, Diodorus Siculus says, "*Horum*
I (Scythia

(*Scythiæ regum*) magno post tempore progenies virtute et belli artibus insignis, regiones ultra Tanaim usque ad Thraciam subjecit. Versis deinde ad alteram partem armis, ad Nilum Ægypti pervenire: redactisque in potestatem quæ intermediæ erant gentibus, usque ad Orientem Oceanum, et Caspium mare, paludemque Meotidem imperium protenderunt."*

At different, but, indeed, remote periods, the Scythians had possessed themselves of almost every part of Asia. And thus in the construction of the words *Orientem Oceanum*, the Chinese is to be taken as blended with the Indian ocean. Of all the ancient armies we read of in history, the Scythian are unquestionably the most ancient. May not the immense conquests, if such are to be historically interpreted, given by the heathen mythology to Bacchus, be presumed to have been the conquests of the Scythians? It is a fact notorious, that the Hindboos, the Chinese, the Japonese, the Persians, and all the other scyons of this old stem, were great and flourishing people, while the Greeks and Romans, by whose annals we have long been circumscribed, were as wild as the wildest of the Americans.

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Pliny

* Bibl. lib. ii.

Pliny says, the Hindoos reckoned one hundred and fifty-four kings, from the reign of Bacchus to the arrival of Alexander among them. *Colliguntur a Libero patre ad Alexandrum Magnum reges eorum cliv.* * According to the calculation of Bailly, the first of these kings lived 3553 years before Christ. Adding to this the fifty-two years, given by ancient historians as the duration of Bacchus's reign, the commencement of his reign will be found to be 3605 years before our æra. And these dates will be found wonderfully to accord with what Justin says of the splendour, superior power, and antiquity of the Scythiac nation. "The Persians," says Justin, "looked upon the nation of the *Sacas* to be so considerable, that they gave this appellation to all the Scythians." *Persæ Scythas in universum Sacas appellavere.* The Scythians themselves looked upon the country inhabited by the *Sacas*, as the birth-place or cradle of their nation. It comprehended all that part of Tartary, which I have above mentioned, as extending from the 90th degree of longitude, to the 120th degree; and from the 35th degree of latitude, to about the 48th degree. Even so late as the year 1757, the Chinese, after a long contest,

Hist. Nat. lib. vi. chap. 31.

contest, drove a large body of Tartars from this country, twenty thousand families of whom took shelter in the Russian dominions. The Sacas, that is, part of the ancient Scythians, were *nomades*, or shepherds. From them came the *symbolical emblem of the ox*; and from them and their elevated plains, came down all the rich torrents of religion and of laws, which now fertilize the earth. Their empire was universally settled, many ages before Abraham, the father of the people of God, had made his appearance. And hence the Israelites were historically modern, in comparison to the Scythians.*

The immensity of the traditionary conquests of the Scythians would lead one to doubt of their reality, were it not for those of the same people, in a later period of history, under the denominations of Turks and of Tartars. Zingis Cawn, in the twelfth century, established himself with his Scythians in India and China, in the same manner that, centuries before him, Bacchus and Fohi did in the same places. The different irruptions of the Tartars have so strong a resemblance to those of the Scythians, that the history of the one almost appears to be the history of the other: and however great the con-

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quests

* D'Hankerville.

quests of the ancient Scythians may have been, those of the modern Scythians appear to have at least equalled, if not to have surpassed them. No dominion ever approached so near to universal monarchy, as that of Zingis Cawn: and yet, incredible as it may seem, it was not till nearly two centuries after his vast acquisitions, that Marco Paolo, the noble Venetian, gave the first idea to Europe of the dominions of Zingis Cawn.

The Greeks seem to have had the same idea of the Scythians, that we have of the Tartars. They looked upon certain hordes of them to be Barbarians; so do we. But, the arts and sciences flourished among others of these Scythians, when their very rudiments were unknown in Europe. Astronomy, and other sublime branches of knowledge, were cultivated by the Scythians, when there was not a man from the Black Sea to the Northern Ocean who could write his name. This people, as an emblem of their common mother, carried in their flags and ensigns the figure of a *serpent*, or dragon. *Signa Scythica sunt dracones conveniente longitudine pendentes ex contis.* This is the most ancient figure and military ensign we know of. The Romans borrowed it from the Scythians, and

and gave the bearers of the standards the very appellation itself. * The Chinese and Japonese adored it in like manner. Nor is it a little remarkable, that Herodotus should give us the clue to this ensign, or armorial bearing, of the Chinese, a people with whom he was as little acquainted, as we were with the people of Otaheite fifty years ago. How the people of Israel came by it, it is not very difficult to conjecture. Babylon, whose priests were greatly celebrated, gave residence to the ancestors of Abraham. He himself was born at *Ur* in Mesopotamia. From the Mesopotamians, therefore, he might have derived the idea; and from him the Israelites.

The Scythians, we are informed, worshipped a variety of Gods. Their principal divinity however, was Vesta, whom they called *Tabita*. The two next in consideration were, Jupiter, whom they called *Papeus*, and *Apia* or the earth, whom they regarded as his wife. Besides these, they worshipped Apollo, the celestial Venus, and Neptune, under different designations. But, their most favourite god seems to have been Mars. To him they dedicated temples and altars. They worshipped fire also, as the principle of all things, and gave it the name of

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Vulcan

* Arrian.

† Herodotus.

Vulcan.* These points of religious ordination, however, are not to be supposed to have been universally prevalent throughout Scythia. The resident Scythians might have had one system of worship; the Nomades, so called from the *Νομῶν*, might have had another.

I have before remarked the prodigious elevation of Oriental Tartary. At one hundred leagues only from Pekin, it has a height equal to that of the Pic of Teneriffe.† In the country of the Mongales, the barometer makes it level with the summit of the highest of the Alps. The countries which give rise to the Orka and Selinga, are still higher: Chimborazo, of the Andes, is not so much above the level of the sea; of course, the Ararat of Armenia, the Caucasus, Cordeliers, Alps, all give way to this extraordinary convexity of this part of Asia. Now, does not this afford strong presumption, that the Ararat of Armenia, as I have stated in a former letter, could not have been the spot on which the ark rested, for it is expressly said in Genesis, “That all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered; that the ark rested in the seventh month, in the seventeenth day, on the mountain of Ararat; that the

* Clement. Alex.

† Bouguer.

the waters decreased continually until the tenth month ; and that in the tenth month, on the first day of the tenth month, were the tops of the other mountains seen." From these passages, it is surely to be gathered, that Ararat was considered as raised far above all the other mountains of the globe, its top being ready as a resting place for the ark, so many months *before* the others were seen, and that too, while "the waters returned from the earth continually." The author of Genesis did not, in fixing the name of the mountain or high land, accurately, at the same time, fix the country in which it was placed.

In such an elevated country, then, why may we not suppose astronomy to have been originally cultivated? Bailly gives the 50th degree of latitude to the center of the Scythiac empire. And where is the inconsistency of conceiving an intelligent, an enlightened, and a wise people, placed under the 50th degree of north latitude? It has been nearly at that distance from the Equator, that the greatest discoverers, at least of modern days, have had their existence. London, Paris, and Berlin, are nearly in the same latitude. Let us then not be too incredulous, much less indifferent about getting acquainted with such a people, though they are not now to be produced.

produced. It is but stepping back three or four thousand years, and entertaining ourselves with, let us suppose, even a vision of things no where else to be found, and which we may venture to believe to be the resemblance, at least, if not the only true portrait, of the ancient world.

Herodotus tells us, the Scythians having possessed themselves of all Asia, prosecuted their march towards Egypt; and that the Egyptian king Psammeticus, in great consternation, presented himself before them, and by bribes, prayers, and entreaties, prevailed upon them to return to their own country. This was in the wane of their empire. In Darius's time, five hundred and eight years before Christ, they possessed, besides others, those tracts between the Danube and the Don, and along the borders of the Black Sea. Darius marched against them with an army computed at seven hundred thousand men. * The conflict was dreadful, but the Scythians were victorious. It is said, indeed, that Mithridates, some centuries afterwards, subdued the Scythians, who had been invincible until then. Yet we know, that Julius Cæsar, immediately previous to his assassination, had planned a series of wars, which were not likely to have terminated but

* Justin.

but with his life. He was to have begun with revenging the death of Crassus, and reducing the Parthians. Next, he was to have passed by Hyrcania, and the coasts of the Caspian Sea, and ultimately with his whole force to have fallen upon Scythia,

LETTER LXIX.

VOLTAIRE says, tigers, and not astronomers, have found their way down to us from Scythia. “Did the Asiatic or European Scythia,” says he, “ever pour any thing upon us, but barbarous, ferocious hordes, who always delighted in drenching their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures? Can we seriously suppose these terrible devastators to have descended their mountains with quadrants, astrolabes, and other instruments of science? Many Greeks, we know, travelled into the east, to pick up the knowledge and wisdom of the Brahmans; but who ever saw a Greek in the land of Gog and Magog on the same errand?” This, however, with this lively writer’s good leave, is begging the question. We are not speaking of the Tartars of to-day; we are speaking of the Scythians, immediately subsequent to the deluge. Would it not be as just to conclude, that Greece never had an Euclid, a Sophocles, or a Solon, because the present Tartars, or Turks, in that country, have neither law-givers, poets, nor mathematicians?

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The Scythian is undoubtedly the first empire, of which any memory hath reached us. Nor has the opinion been without plausibility, which has been adopted by late mythologists, that Saturn, Jupiter, Bacchus, &c. might have been monarchs of this first empire, but deified, after their death, by the grateful people over whom they had reigned.* But, as I have said before, we are always to recollect, that there were stationary, as well as wandering Scythians. The many millions, with which their dominions must have swarmed, could never have been in the state in which the Nomades were, when they were first made known to the Greeks, ignorant how to sow or reap,† and only capable of deriving subsistence from the fruits which the earth naturally produced, from the chase, and the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds. The truth is, there were Nomades in India, Arabia, and Africa, as well as in Scythia, but still there were settled communities. Those of Africa were afterwards called Numidians, by a small change of the letters which composed their name. The Bedouins of Arabia are Nomades at this hour.

Astronomy, and other sciences, were understood upwards of three thousand years ago.

Bailly

* Pinkerton.

† Herodotus:

Bailly has shewn, that astronomy must have been cultivated anterior to the deluge.* For how long must it not have been before man could have conceived, that this firm earth we tread upon, without either support or prop, revolves on its own axis in the unbounded regions of space! Yet from this, to the calculation of the phænomena of the heavens, perhaps to the daring calculation of the rapidity of light, what ages must have passed, what efforts of the genius of man must have been concentrated! Before the science of the planetary system can be reduced to demonstration, almost every other science must be fundamentally understood. If precedence is to be given to any, it certainly cannot be to astronomy. The distant wonders of the heavenly sphere require not only metaphysical abstraction, but all the aid of mathematical calculation. Nor does Sacred Writ itself oppose this opinion. Cain built a town to the east of Eden. Tubal-cain, six hundred years before the deluge, was versed in the fabrication of copper and iron. Jubal was instructed in the nature of sounds, and in all the complicated harmonies of music. Enoch, together with a regular form of worship, established sacrifices and feasts to the honour of the God of nature. Noah, himself, built

* L'Astronom. Ancienne.

built a large vessel, which, even in this nautical age, would require all the application of almost every art and every science given to man. But, did not Abraham, afterwards, draw his sword to sacrifice his son? Eliezer offer to Rebecca his vases of gold and silver? and Judah give to Thamar his bracelet and his ring? Job speaks of mines, and of the manner of working them. The Israelites made a calf of gold. Moses even rendered gold potable.

The oldest astronomical observations of which we know any thing, are those of the Hindoos. They are correct for 4893 years, commencing 3102 years before our æra, and are nearly of the same date with that given by Manetho to the Egyptians, and by Herodotus to the Phœnicians. The manner in which these observations were calculated, is likewise original, and different from that of any other people. It grows out of clear and irrefragable data, aided by a chain of accurate and anterior observations. From this, the parent of all future planetary systems, the Chaldeans drew their astronomical riches; from the same source flowed all the knowledge of the Egyptians. The Greeks, we know, learned from a strange people; and by the Greeks we have been enlightened. It is said,
the

the Egyptians and the Chaldeans went infinitely further back in their calculations. But, this is merely asserted, not proved. The Hindoos, however, have proof. They have preserved their historical monuments. They have their *Jyotish*, or astronomical Sastra, so ancient as to be reputed a divine revelation.* Moreover, the actual ignorance of the Brahmans, at this hour, of the elementary parts of this science, undeniably shew, that their ancestors, or a *more ancient* people, were the inventors of the astronomy, which, in a blind routine, they now, in some instances, practise. The grand theoretical system of Hindoo astronomy, which may be said to be lost, was, from what still remains of it, rich, varied, and correct. The tables of Trivalore, Narsipore, and Chrisnabouram, together with those of Siam, demonstratively evince the profound knowledge of the early Hindoos in this science. In a word, says Bailly, *Richesse de la science, variété des méthodes, exactitude des déterminations, tout assure aux Indiens, ou à leurs auteurs la possession & l'invention de leur astronomie. Les Indiens donnent à cette science une date très antique qui répond à la description du ciel.*†

The

* Asiatic Researches.

† L'Astronom. Indienne & Orientale.

The attention and success with which the Hindoos studied the motions of the heavenly bodies, were so little known to the Greeks and Romans, that it is hardly mentioned by them, but in the most cursory manner. * The Mahometans, however, on their establishing an intercourse with India, observed and acknowledged the superiority of the Hindoos in astronomical knowledge. Of the Europeans who visited India, after the communication with it by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, Bernier (and celebrity should be joined to his honest name) was the first who learned, that the Indians had long applied to the study of astronomy. But the first scientific proof of their great proficiency was given us by De La Loubere; who, on his return from his embassy to Siam, brought with him an extract from a Siamese manuscript, which contained tables and rules for calculating the places of the sun and moon. The manner in which these tables were constructed, rendered the principles on which they were founded extremely obscure; and it required a commentator as conversant in astronomical calculation as Cassini, to explain the meaning of this curious fragment. The epoch of the Siamese tables corresponds to the 21st of March,

VOL. IV.

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A. D.

* Strabo.

A. D. 638. Another set of tables was transmitted from Chrisnabouram, in the Carnatic, the epoch of which answers to the 10th of March, 1491. A third set of tables came from Narsipore, and the epoch of them goes no farther back than A. D. 1569. The fourth and most curious set of tables was published by M. le Gentil, to whom they were communicated by a learned Brahman of Trivalore, a small town on the Coromandel Coast, about twelve miles west of Negapatam. The epoch of these tables is of high antiquity, and coincides with the beginning of the celebrated æra of the Calyougham, or Colle Jogue, which commenced, according to the Indian account, three thousand one hundred and two years before the birth of Christ. These four sets of tables have been examined and compared by Bailly ; and his calculations have been verified, and his reasonings illustrated and extended, by the learned Professor Playfair, *

The general result of all the enquiries, reasonings, and calculations, in regard to Indian astronomy, which have hitherto been made public, is, that the motion of the heavenly bodies, and more particularly their situation at the commencement of the different epochs to which the

* Robertson.

the four sets of tables refer, are ascertained with great accuracy; and that many of the elements of their calculations, especially for very remote ages, are verified by an astonishing coincidence with the tables of the modern astronomy of Europe, as improved by the latest and most nice deductions from the theory of gravitation. The accuracy of these results, however, is less surprising, than the justness and scientific nature of the principles, on which the tables, by which they calculate, are constructed; for the method of predicting eclipses, followed by the Brahmans, is of a kind altogether different from any that has been found in the possession of nations in the infancy of astronomy. Geometry, as well as arithmetic, are here called in to contribute their assistance. The Indians never employ any of the grosser computations, that were the pride of the early astronomers of Egypt, and of Babylon.

The older the calculations of the Hindoos, the more accurate they are found. For those very remote ages (nearly five thousand years distant from the present) their astronomy is most accurate; and the nearer it comes down to our own times, the conformity of its results with ours diminishes. From astronomy in its most

advanced state is this alone to be expected : for when an estimate is endeavoured to be made of the geometrical skill, necessary for the construction of the Indian tables and rules, it is found to be very considerable ; and besides the knowledge of elementary geometry, it must have required plain and spherical trigonometry, or something equivalent to them, together with certain methods of approximating to the values of geometrical magnitudes, which seem to rise very far above the elements of any of those sciences. * Now all this astronomical knowledge, the Brahmans of the Carnatic say, they derived from the *north*.

M. le Gentil, in his account, informs us, that the Brahmans, instructed in astronomy, were supposed, by the Hindoos of Trivalore, to have come from beyond the Ganges. This, indeed, to a people on the coast of Coromandel, may be conceived to be from Bengal, or Banaris, the great seminary of learning, rather than from any other place. But besides that Banaris is not so very ancient, as is imagined, Le Pere Gauthier acquaints us, the subjects of the Dala Lama of Thibet, and the people of Napal, have ancient astronomical records. The Chinese also

* Robertson.

also acknowledge, that their acquaintance with the planetary system came to them from the west, from the side of Samarcand. But the remark of d'Anville is still more conclusive.—“The ancient latitudes of *Sera Metropolis*,” says he, “this day Kantcheou in China; of *Mara-canda*, this day Samarcand in Tartary; and of *Nagara* or *Dionysiopolis*, this day Nagar in India, are accurate, and conformable to our best modern observations. Astronomy thus had a connected chain from Samarcand to China; from China to Nagara; from Nagara to Banaris, whose latitude was also precisely ascertained; and from Banaris to the extremity of the peninsula of India.*

Among all these nations, we find the fragments, not the elements of the science of astronomy. They evidently have received an inheritance; they have become the depositaries; they are not the inventors. Why should we not, therefore, believe that between the Caspian and the Gulph of Persia, and still farther to the northward, there existed a people in antiquity, who were more renowned, and better instructed, than others? In Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America, is there not a mass of astronomical

S 3 knowledge

* Bailly.

knowledge now in circulation, which has confessedly been derived from one insignificant corner of the earth? Persepolis seems to have been founded three thousand two hundred and nine years before Christ. But this, the chief city of the worshippers of the sun, was built by a leader called Diemschid, who, in every point of view, has the appearance of having been as much a stranger to the Persians, as Fohi, their first enlightener, was to the Chinese. About two thousand five hundred years before Christ, we find Babylon without arts, and without defence, and that then a class of scientific men came among them; a college of priests, called Chaldeans, who even in some measure gave their name to the country. Does not all this unequivocally speak as of wrecks of philosophy; of the sublimest truths, though disfigured by fabulous absurdities; and of the most abstract results, though without any remnant of first principles.

Moreover, is there not a very strong argument to be drawn from the very language, the sacred and scientific language of the Brahmans, the Sanskreet? This language is unintelligible to the Hindoos in general; it is totally different from their common vernacular tongue. But how are we to conceive it possible, that the Sanskreet, being

being the original, the primitive language of the country, should have been lost among the uncontaminated Aborigines themselves, or at least be found only amongst a certain class of learned men? Languages indisputably undergo changes. But the language in which a man has imbibed his first ideas, however subsequently refined, will still remain with him, and in some degree at least be handed down to his posterity. But here is a language the richest, the most harmonious, and the most expressive in the world, remaining in vigour in the midst of a great people, and yet unknown to that people. May we not fairly conjecture, therefore, that the Sanskreet may be to the Hindoos, what the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin are to us, that is, the language of another, and a more ancient people? The Sanskreet is not like the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians and Americans, or the Ogham, or mysterious character, of the Druids. The Sanskreet is a full and a perfect language, alphabetically constructed, and grammatically arranged.

“ Besides all this,” says Bailly, “ I have established, on the clearest inductions, that the divisions of the zodiac into twelve signs must have preceded the Christian æra, more than four thousand six hundred years; and consequently must have existed

thirteen or fourteen hundred years before the most ancient known people of antiquity. Nor could hazard ever have brought about, among people so distant as the Hindoos, Chinese, and Egyptians, the astonishing conformity in their measurement of time, by the little period of seven days, which we call a week, and which they equally designed after the names of the seven planets. But the language is still, perhaps, the feature the most striking. “The grand source of Indian literature,” remarks Halhed,* “the parent of almost every dialect, from the Persian Gulph to the China sea, is the Sanskreet, a language of the most venerable and unfathomable antiquity; which, although at present shut up in the libraries of Brahmans, and appropriated solely to the records of their religion, appears to have been current over most of the oriental world; and traces of its original extent may still be discovered in almost every district of Asia. I have often been astonished,” says he, “to find the similitude of Sanskreet words with those of Persian and Arabic, and even of Latin and Greek; and this not in technical and metaphorical terms, which the mutation of refined arts and improved manners might have occasionally introduced, but in the ground-work of language,

* Preface to the Grammar of the Bengal Language.

guage, in monosyllables, in the names of numbers, and in the appellations of such things as would be discriminated on the immediate dawn of civilization. The resemblance which may be observed in the characters on the medals and signets of various districts of Asia, the light which they reciprocally reflect upon each other, and the general analogy which they all bear to the same grand prototype, afford another ample field for curiosity. The coins of Assam, Napaul, Cashmeere, and many other kingdoms, are all stamped with Sanskreet characters, and mostly contain allusions to the old Sanskreet mythology. The same conformity, I have observed, on the impression of seals from Bootan and Thibet. A collateral inference may likewise be deduced from the peculiar arrangement of the Sanskreet alphabet, so very different from that of any other quarter of the world. This extraordinary mode of combination still exists in the greatest part of the east, from the Indus to Pegu, in dialects now apparently unconnected, and in characters completely dissimilar; whence arises a forcible argument that they are all derived from the same source. Another channel of speculation presents itself in the names of persons and places, of titles and dignities, which are open to general notice, and in which, to the farthest limits

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mits of Asia, may be found manifest traces of the Sanskreet."

We may still go farther. The last, and the present Emperor of China, themselves *Mantchou-Tartars*, have so laudably encouraged the study of the Mantchou-Tartar language, which is not written with hieroglyphic characters like the Chinese, but with an alphabet of accurate construction, that in the words of a learned author, we are now able to say, the Mantchou is the most perfect of the Tartaric tongues, not excepting the sacred dialect of Thibet or Tangut; and as the latter is a Tartaric speech, so is the Sanskreet, or ancient language of Hindostan. * "The Thibitan dialect," says he, "is celebrated as comprising the sacred books of Boudh, or Beddha, founder of Sabeism; the Sanskreet presents those of Brahma, who only altered the dogmas, and appropriated to himself the ideas of the former: in a word, Brahma was only a Sabeian heretic, and posterior to Beddha, whose sacred impostures may be regarded as the most ancient of all those which now exercise human credulity. From this same Beddha came the Fo of the Chinese, and the Woden and the Thor of the Goths. Between the languages of Thibet,

* M. Langlès.

Thibet, the Mongols, the Sanskreet, and the Mantchou-Tartar, there is an extraordinary affinity. The syllabary, given by M. Bayer, is convincing on the subject.* M. Frèret also, who was equally well informed in every branch of erudition, admires the striking affinity between the Mantchou and the ancient Arabic and Chaldaic.

It is unnecessary to enter in a very minute manner into the Sanskreet literature, which hath been made known to us. You have seen the Mahabarat, an epic poem, in high admiration among the Hindoos. This work was composed about three thousand years before the Christian æra ; or five hundred years, or more, before Moses was born. The short episode from it, intitled Baghvat Geeta, is elegantly translated by a great oriental scholar.* To the same translator we are indebted for Heeto-Pades, or Amicable Instruction, in a series of connected fables, interspersed with moral, prudential, and political maxims. This work has been translated into every language spoken in the east. It very early even found its way into Europe, and among us has been circulated at different periods, with additions and alterations, under the names of
Pilpay

* Commentaria Academiæ Petropolitanæ, tom. iiii.
p. 389.

* Wilkins.

Pilpay and Esop ; the latter of whom died five hundred and fifty-six years before Christ. The last publication of consequence has been *Sacontala*, a dramatic poem, written about a century before the birth of Christ, and translated by Sir William Jones.

What the Egyptian priests said of the Greeks, that they were but children in antiquity, might with equal propriety be said of the Egyptians themselves, and other ancient nations, in regard to sciences and arts. These, they falsely ascribed to the invention of chimerical persons, greatly posterior to the deluge. Whereas the sacred writings inform us, that before that epoch, God had discovered to mankind the art of tilling and cultivating the ground ; of spinning wool and flax, and weaving them into stuffs and linens ; of forging and polishing iron and brass, and putting them to numberless uses, necessary and convenient for life and society. We learn from the same Scriptures, that soon after the deluge, human industry had made several discoveries worthy of admiration ; such as, the art of spinning gold thread, and of interweaving it with stuffs ; that of beating gold, and with light thin leaves of it, to gild wood and other materials ; the secret of casting metals ; as brass, silver, and gold ;

gold, and of making all sorts of figures with them, in imitation of nature, and all sorts of vessels and utensils, either for ornament or use; the art of painting, and carving upon wood, stone, and marble; and to name no more, that of dying silks and cloths, and giving them the most exquisite and beautiful colours.

The original station, allotted to man by his Creator, was on this earth, then probably in the mild and fertile regions of the east. The wisdom of the east was always celebrated. It was in Asia that men first settled after the deluge. This was the post-diluvian cradle of the arts and sciences, the remembrance of which has been preserved by tradition. Remains are discovered, in the bowels of the earth, of animals that no longer exist; and rude weapons, instruments, and ornaments, are often traced, but never accounted for by the antiquary. But can it be affirmed, that no monuments are found, either on the surface, or in the caverns of the earth, of enlightened and refined nations, with whose history we are unacquainted? If all the monuments and memorials of the Romans had perished, would not the discovery of the Herculaneum have proved the existence of a great and a civilized nation? And are there no similar

lar monuments to be found in the more ancient history of the earth? is there not a single relic of ingenuity and art, that we can refer to the original inventors?

We have every proof, that knowledge is derived to us from the east. *Omnis humanitas ab orientalibus defluxit.* Historians affirm, that Democritus received the doctrine which he introduced into Greece from the philosophers of India, Æthiopia, and Egypt, as well as from the Magi and Chaldeans, into whose countries he travelled to enquire into their learning. Strabo informs us, that, in India, philosophers were looked upon with the greatest esteem. Diodorus Siculus says the same. Megasthenes expressly assures us, that all the doctrines of physics were cultivated by the Brahmans of India, previous to their introduction into Greece. And Megasthenes was contemporary with Alexander, one of his most enlightened officers, and a long time after his death, resident as ambassador at Patna or Palliputra, the Pallibothra of the Greeks. Philosophy flourished in the east, much antecedent to its appearance in Greece. How many arts dependant on chymical processes were universally practised there, although unknown in Greece, and all other parts

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parts of Europe ! Do not the first books which treat of chymistry as a science, and which, notwithstanding their early date, afford a good account both of its speculative and practical parts, come down to us from writers of the east ?

The Egyptians themselves are represented by the most learned of the prophets, as founding their claim to knowledge on their eastern descent, and thereby admitting the superiority of their oriental masters. “ I am a son of the wise, a son of the kings of the east,” * for so the word hitherto translated ancient, as it has often been observed, should be rendered. Obelisks and pyramids are, moreover, eastern buildings. The symbols on the Egyptian ones lead to an Asiatic origin. The hooded snake, which is engraved on the obelisk of Ramases, now at Rome, is a reptile not found in any part of Africa, but is peculiar to the south eastern parts of Asia. † It is distinguishable among the sculptures in the sacred caverns of the island of Elephanta; ‡ and appears added as a characteristic symbol to many of the idols of the modern Hindoos.

Egypt

* Isaiah.

† Norden. Sonnerat. D'Hankerville.

‡ Niebuter.

Egypt might truly be denominated, in some degree, an Indian nation, having received a colony of that people, by whom it was named Aīt or Aëtia. * Stephanus Byzantinus says, Εκλήθη δε και Μυζαροι, και Αερια, και Ποταμια, και Αετιοι απο τινος ΙΝΔΟΥ Αεπυ. Hence it is said by Diodorus Siculus, that Osiris was an Indian by extraction. Οσιριδος Ινδου ειναι το γενος, because the Cuthite religion came from the Tigris. There is a remarkable passage in the *Chronicon Paschale*: “At the time when the tower of Babel was erected, a certain person made his appearance in the world, who was (*Indus*) an Indian. He was famed for his wisdom, and for his skill in astronomy. He first delineated schemes of the heavens, and instructed the Indi in that science.” *Nilus*, the Egyptian, tells Apollonius Tyanæus, that the Indi, of all the people in the world, were the most knowing. Solomon is said to have excelled in wisdom all the children of the east.

To the present hour, indeed, there has been no fixed idea of the antiquity of the arts and sciences in the east. The astronomical data, however, given us in the tables I have already mentioned, in some manner bring the history of

* Bryant.

of the heavens, in proof of the history of the earth. But in all the sciences, which contribute towards extending our knowledge of nature, in mathematics, mechanics, and astronomy, arithmetic is of elementary use. In whatever country, then, we find that such attention has been paid to the improvement of arithmetic, as to render its operations most easy and correct, we may presume, that the sciences depending upon it, have obtained a superior degree of perfection. Such improvement of this science we find in India. While among the Greeks and Romans, the only method used for the notation of numbers was by the letters of the alphabet, which necessarily rendered arithmetical calculation extremely tedious and operose; the Indians had, from time immemorial, employed, for the same purpose, the ten cyphers or figures, now universally known, and by means of them performed every operation in arithmetic with great facility and expedition. By the happy invention of giving a different value to each figure, according to its change of place, no more than ten figures are needed in calculations the most complex, and of any given extent; and arithmetic is the most perfect of all the sciences. The Arabians, not long after their settlement in Spain, introduced this mode of notation into Europe, and

were candid enough to acknowledge, they had derived it from the Indians. Though the advantages of this mode of notation are obvious and great, yet so slowly do mankind adopt any new inventions, that the use of it was for some time confined to science. By degrees, however, men of business relinquished the former cumbersome method of computation by letters, and the Indian arithmetic came into general use throughout Europe.* It is now so familiar and simple, that the ingenuity of the people, to whom we are indebted for the invention, or at least the transmission, is less observed, and less celebrated, than it merits. †

The science of ethics, which has for its object, to ascertain what distinguishes virtue from vice, to investigate what motives should prompt man to action, and to prescribe rules for the conduct of life, as it is above all others the most interesting, seems to have deeply engaged the attention of the Brahmans. Their sentiments, with regard to these points, were various; and, like the philosophers of Greece, the Brahmans were divided into sects, distinguished by maxims and tenets often diametrically opposite. That sect, with whose opinions we are fortunately best

* Montaña.

† Robertson:

acquainted, had established a system of morals, founded on principles the most generous and dignified, which unassisted reason is capable of discovering. Man, they taught, was formed, not for speculation or indolence, but for action. He is born, not for himself alone, but for his fellow-men. The happiness of the society of which he is a member, the good of mankind, are his ultimate and highest objects. In chusing what to prefer, or what to reject, the justice and propriety of his choice, are the only considerations to which he should attend. The events which may follow his actions, are not in his own power; and whether they be prosperous or adverse, as long as he is satisfied with the purity of the motives which induced him to act, he can enjoy that approbation of his own mind, which constitutes genuine happiness, independent of the power of fortune, or the opinions of other men.* “Man,” says the Mahabarat writer, many centuries before Moses, “enjoyeth not freedom from action. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by those principles which are inherent in his nature. He who restraineth his active faculties, and sitteth down with his mind attentive to the objects of his senses, may be called one of an astrayed soul. The man is praised, who having

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subdued

* Robertson.

subdued all his passions, performeth with his active faculties all the functions of life, unconcerned about the issue. Let the motive be in the deed, and not in the event. Be not one, whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction. Depend upon application ; perform thy duty ; abandon all thought of the consequence, and make the event equal, whether it terminate in good or in evil. Seek an asylum then in wisdom alone ; for the miserable and unhappy are so on account of the event of things. Men who are endowed with true wisdom, are unmindful of good or evil in this world. Study then to obtain this application of thy understanding, for such application in business is a precious art. Wise men, who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions, are freed from the chains of birth, *and go to the regions of eternal happiness.*" *

From these, and other passages, which I might quote, we learn that the distinguishing doctrines of the Stoical school were taught in India many ages before the time of Zeno, and inculcated with a persuasive earnestness, nearly resembling that of Epictetus ; and it is not without astonishment

* Baghvat Geeta.

nishment, that we find the tenets of this manly, active philosophy, which seem to be formed only for men of the most vigorous spirit, prescribed as the rule of conduct to a race of people, more eminent for the gentleness of their disposition, than for the elevation of their minds.* But, might not this also have found its way across that ridge of mountains, which, under various denominations, forms the stony girdle which encircles Asia, and constitutes the northern barrier of India? As Alexander, Tamerlane, and Nadir Shaw, in three distant ages, found the same route into India, why might not the sciences and philosophy have done the same, if they had once an existence amongst an anterior people? Egypt, in her commerce, transmitted the seeds of these divine plants, and gave them to Grecian and Roman inheritance. But, is it not curious that, though so early known by the name of Indi, the word *Hindoo* itself does not belong to the Sanskreet language? Bharata is the Sanskreet name of the country we call India.*

Three causes have operated, perhaps, more to the diffusion of knowledge than all the rest put together; military ambition, the spirit of commerce, and zeal for the propagation of religion.

T 3

Ambition,

* Robertson.

† Wilkins.

Ambition, or the rage of conquest, was most probably the earliest motive for visiting foreign countries ; and nations, separated by mountains and seas, were first brought together in order to cut each other's throats. The ancient heroes were the inventors or improvers of geography, and traced with the sword the map of the world. Diodorus Siculus says, in the ancient books of the Brachmans, which, even in his days, had no longer existence, it was recorded, that the rites and ceremonials of religion, civil laws, and political institutions, were carried into India by Bacchus, and that for these benefits he had been ranked among the Gods. Now, might not the Bacchus of the ancients be the Brahma of the moderns ? Megasthenes, who made researches into the history of the Indians, was convinced of the identity of Bacchus, as the legislator of India. Eratosthenes, indeed, taking Bacchus as given in the mythology of the Greeks, was very naturally led to look upon him as an imaginary being. And hence the observation of Strabo may be easily accounted for, that though the exploits of Hercules and Bacchus have obtained credit with Megasthenes and a few others, Eratosthenes and most other writers have considered them as fabulous and incredible, the mere offspring of Grecian vanity.

The Scythian conquest, and the arrival of Brahma in India, having preceded the Christian æra three thousand six hundred and five years, the period at which the reign of Bacchus finished, which lasted fifty-two years, was anterior to the death of Moses more than two thousand years. The *Vedams*, or texts of scripture, were published by Brahma, together with the *Shasters*, or commentaries, about six hundred years afterwards. The epoch of Bacchus, we gather from Diodorus Siculus, who says, that he reigned over all India fifty-two years, and died at an extreme old age. Many of the ancient authors assure us, that Bromios was the name of Bacchus. The Βρομιος of the Greeks, the Bromius of the Latins, and the Brahma of India, were all one and the same person. *Brumatia autem a Brumo dicebantur: quo nomine Romani Bacchum appellabant.* These Brumalian festivals, celebrated at Rome in honour of Bacchus, about the month of December, were instituted with the foundation of the city, by Romulus. The Dionysia were the festivals in honour of Bacchus, among the Greeks. Their form and solemnity were first introduced into Greece from Egypt. They were the same as those celebrated by the Egyptians in honour of Isis. The years were numbered by their celebration. At first they were celebrated with

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simplicity,

simplicity, and the time was consecrated to mirth. It was then usual to bring a vessel of wine, adorned with a vine branch, after which followed a goat, a basket of figs, and the φαλλοι. The worshippers imitated, in their dress and actions, the poetical fictions concerning Bacchus. The Dionysia, called τριετηρια, from their being observed every three years, were said to have been instituted by Bacchus himself, in commemoration of his Indian expedition, in which he spent three years. Among other extravagancies, the virgins carried serpents in their baskets, and the priests put serpents in their hair. *Evoe Bache! Io! Io! Evoe! Iache! Io bacche! Evohe!*

The Hindoos acknowledge Brahma for their first legislator, and say, that he drew them from a wild life, and instructed them in arts, sciences, and agriculture; moreover, that he gave them their most ancient and venerable books, and consequently writing. Our knowledge and our errors come originally from countries the most anciently civilized; and from those where the first impulse has been given to the human mind. The east, of course, gave birth to the greater part of those opinions which have since extended their influence over the rest of the world. Religion, from which men expect
consolation,

consolation, but which they often turn into a source of calamity, likewise issued from this prolific womb. Of this we may be readily convinced, by attending to the spirit of all those systems that have hitherto been promulgated : the amazing conformity that subsists among them all, is sufficient to shew, if we had no other evidence, that they have but one common origin. They are all animated by the same spirit, and have all the same tendency : the principles, the dogmas, and ceremonies, that constitute them, are all the same. If we compare them together, we shall soon be convinced, that they are almost all reducible to one, and that their differences proceed from causes, that are merely local and extraneous. The Scandinavian invoked the terrible giant of the frost, * while the inhabitant of the Tropic prostrated himself before the burning star of day : and yet Odin, the famous legislator, who formed a nation of heroes under the ice of the Pole, issued from the same regions where, a few ages before, the Persians had adopted the system of the Magi ; where, in modern times, a simple camel-driver kindled in the hearts of the Arabians an enthusiasm, which changed the face of the world. Thus the institutions of Odin
were

* Mallet.

were similar to those of Mahommed; both spoke the language of Orpheus, of Zoroaster, and of all who have founded a new religion, on the unaided dictates of human reason. *

The first principle of almost all religions exhibits man unhappy, and groaning under the effects of divine vengeance; and again it represents him as restored to himself, and enjoying the tranquility of nature. The object of all is, to inculcate the doctrine of a Providence, which punishes guilt, and offers a recompence to virtue; to purify the manners, and to unfold the system of universal nature, or of the origin and arrangement of the universe. The Hindoos hold three regions of the world, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. Heaven they divide into different regions, which they call *Lok*. Thus there is the *Peetree-Lok*, or region of fathers; and the *Matree-Lok*, or region of mothers. But there is no region allotted for old maids and bachelors: these are obliged to renew their youth in this world, and to try their luck once more. Hell, or the mansion below, they seem to suppose to be a place for temporary punishments; and this they locate in the bowels of the earth. The earth itself,

* Le C. de Septehenes.

self, they believe to be a place of punishments and rewards, as well as of probation. They hold salvation to be an union with the universal spirit of God, and a final exemption from mortal birth. Although the attributes of destruction more particularly belong to Seeva, yet it is common to allow the same power to each of the three persons of the Hindoo Trinity, Brahma, Veeshnoo (or Narayena) and Seeva, seeing they mean but one God, Brahm, or Brahma. Deendeema is a small drum, which it is supposed Seeva, the destroying angel, will sound on the last day, when all things shall be dissolved.*

Brahma, Veeshnoo, and Seeva, are undoubtedly only emblems of the power, the goodness, and justice of the Supreme Being, and are sometimes called the *three united in one*. In the dialogues between Krishna and Arjoon, Krishna says, "I am the mystic figure O M;" which mystic figure, or word, is said to signify the Deity, and to be composed of Sanskreet roots, or letters, the first of which stands for Creator; the second Preserver; and the third Destroyer. This word is forbidden to be pronounced except with extreme reverence.

Thus,

• Wilkins.

Thus, also, the Chaldeans had their three principles. The ancient Persians had their Trinity of Mithra. The Japonese have their Triple Divinity. In short, we might not only turn to Egypt for her *numen triplex*, triangle, or ON, but we might even go to South America, for the three Hypostases, or persons in the Divine Essence. The Trinity, however, of the Hindoos is clearly ascertained to have been known to that people fifteen hundred years before Plato was born.* The Hindoo account of Ruder, which was also an appellation given to their principal Divinity, and at times, indeed, to all the three, is remarkable and sublime. It is taken from the *Atherbun-Vede*, a part of the commentary of the Vedams. “The angels of heaven being assembled before Ruder, they prostrated themselves, and humbly required to know who and whence he was?” Ruder replied, “If there had existed any one before me, I would describe myself to you by comparison: but, I was, am, and shall be for evermore. There is none other I can resemble to myself. In me is the essence of all hidden and of all disclosed things. I am the first cause. All things that exist in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south, above and below,

are

* Geeta.

are of me. I am all. I am male and female. I am the three visible fires, and the fire of the sun. I am the most ancient. I am the king of kings. My attributes are transcendent. I am the truth. I am the spirit of the creation. I am the Creator himself. I am Almighty. I am all purity. I am the light, and it is therefore that I exist, to the end that he who knows me may know all angels, all sacred texts, and all their ordinances. He will know the Vedes, and from them he will learn the duties of this life; he will understand the truth, and his actions will be virtuous; and to those who practise virtue, I will give abundance and tranquillity." Having uttered these words, Ruder absorbed himself in his own proper splendour.

This extract from the Vedes, in Sanskreet, was translated by Dara Shekoo, the son of Shaw Jehan, emperor of Hindostan. He likewise translated a hymn addressed to Ruder, taken from the *Judger Vede*, which hymn is, word for word almost, the same with that of Orpheus addressed to Jupiter, Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένητο Ζεὺς ὕστατος ἀρχιμέγαλυνος, &c. It is only substituting the name of Ruder for that of Jupiter, and they will be found one and the same thing. This identity is no little proof of the Hindoos

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and Greeks having drawn their theological ideas from one common source.* Apprehensive, though benevolent minded Christians, indeed, are loth to consider the Hindoo Trinity as any thing better than a stolen combination from a more pure and enlightened doctrine. Their opponents again refer even the Christian Trinity itself to Platonism, and so on to Oriental deductions. To which ever side we turn, the question is really immaterial. Truth, in examination, can never injure any cause that has truth for its foundation, nor bring real prejudice to any religion that hath God for its author. In every philosophical disquisition, no good reason can be assigned, why a man should not, in the plainest and most perspicuous manner, state what appears to him to be matter of fact. Why should he, who is only engaged in the search of truth, assume the appearance of ambiguity or doubt, which only those who wish to mislead, ought to employ?

The Hindoos, beside their Trinity, have inferior and tutelary Deities, like the Greeks. And like them they are represented under different forms, and with symbols expressing their different qualities and attributes. Brahma is said, in

* D'Hankerville.

in Sanskreet, to be the wisdom of God. On his head is a crown. He is represented with four hands ; in one he holds a sceptre ; in another the Vedes ; in a third, a ring or circle, as an emblem of eternity ; and the fourth is empty, being ready to protect his works. Near his image is the bird called Flamingo, on which he is supposed to perform his journies. His Goddess, Seraswaty, is the patroness of imagination and invention, of harmony and eloquence. She is usually represented with a musical instrument in her hand. Veeshnoo is generally worshipped under the form of a human figure, having a circle of heads, and four hands, as emblems of an all-seeing and all-provident Being. Seeva is represented under different human forms, and has a variety of names. Facing his image, is that of an ox in a suppliant posture, his favourite animal. One of the names of his Goddess is Kaly, from Kala, time. Varoona is the God of the seas and waters, and is sometimes represented as riding on a crocodile. Vayoo is the God of the winds, and rides on an antelope, with a sabre in his right hand. Agnee is the God of fire ; has four hands, and rides on a ram. The earth is personified by the Goddess Vasoodha, who, in a verse of the Hectopades, is called Soerabhy, or the
cow

cow of plenty.* Nature is represented as a beautiful young woman, called Prakreety. The sun has several names and epithets : he is sometimes called Sur, and Sham, and king of the stars and planets. In a temple at Banaris, there is an ancient piece of sculpture, well executed, representing this God sitting in a car drawn by a horse with twelve heads, alluding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac.† Chandara, or the moon, is also represented sitting in a car, but drawn by antelopes, and holding a rabbit in the right hand. Vreehaspaty is the God of science and learning; and his attendants the Veedyad-hares, or literary professors of science, are beautiful young nymphs. Darma Deva is the God of virtue, and is sometimes represented by the figure of a white bull. Virsavana is the God of riches, and is represented as a man riding upon a white horse. Dhan-wantary is the God of medicine. Yam Rajah, or Darham Rajah, seems to hold the same office with the Hindoos, that Pluto and Minos held with the Greeks : he is judge of the dead, and ruler of the infernal regions ; he has a sceptre in his hand, and rides on a buffaloe. Krishen, and the nine Gopia, correspond to Apollo and the Muses. The God of Love has many epithets descriptive of

* Wilkins.

† Forster.

of his power ; but the usual one is Kama-deva, or literally, the God of desire. He is said to be the son of the attracting Power ; that he is married to Affection, and that his bosom friend was the Spring. His bow is represented to be of sugar-cane or flowers, the string to be of bees, and his five arrows to be each pointed with an Indian blossom, of a heating quality.* He is figured to ride upon an elephant, whose body is composed of the figures of seven young women, entwined in so ingenious a manner as to exhibit the shape of that animal. The Eros of the Greeks is found riding on a lion. The Demi-gods of the Hindoos, the Dii Minoris Gentis, are the tutelar Deities of almost all the aerial and terrestrial regions ; and every mountain, wood, river, town, or village, has its guardian divinity. Their writings all abound with fanciful relations of the feats of their Demi-gods and heroes, very much resembling those of Bacchus, Hercules, and Theseus. And all this complication of mythological story seems to have been in splendour more than four thousand years ago. †

But, of the Supreme God the Hindoos have no image. The image of Brahma is no where

VOL. IV.

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* Sir William Jones. † Sketches of the Hindoos.

to be found. They say the mind may form some conception of God's attributes, when brought separately before it; but who can grasp the whole within the limited circle of human ideas? "The Hindoos," says Abul Fazel, "believe in the unity of the Godhead; and although they hold images in high veneration, it is only because they represent celestial beings, and prevent their thoughts from wandering."* The Pundits, who translated the code of Gentoo laws, declare it was the Supreme Being, who by his power formed all creatures of the animal, vegetable, and material world, from the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth, to be an ornament to the magazine of creation, and whose comprehensive benevolence selected man, the center of knowledge, to have dominion and authority over the rest; and having bestowed upon this favourite object judgment and understanding, gave him supremacy over the corners of the world.† "O Mighty Being," says Arjoon, "who art the prime Creator, eternal God of Gods, the world's mansion; thou art the incorruptible Being, distinct from all things transient. Thou art before all Gods, the ancient Poorvosh, [vital soul] and the supreme supporter of the universe. Thou knowest all

* Ayeeen Akbery.

† Prelim. Discours.

all things, and art worthy to be known; thou art the Supreme mansion, and by thee, O infinite form, the universe was spread abroad. Reverence be unto thee before and behind; reverence be unto thee on all sides, O thou who art all in all; infinite is thy power and thy glory; thou art the father of all things animate and inanimate; thou art the wise instructor of the whole, worthy to be adored; there is none like unto thee. Where in the three worlds is there one above thee? Wherefore I bow down, and with my body prostrate on the ground, crave thy mercy. Lord! worthy to be adored; for thou shouldest bear with me, even as a father with his son, a friend with his friend, a lover with his beloved.”* A description of the Supreme Being, also, is given in one of the sacred books of the Hindoos, from which it is evident, what were the general sentiments of the learned Brahmans concerning the Divine nature and perfection: “As God is immaterial, he is above all conception; as he is invisible, he can have no form; but, from what we behold of his works, we may conclude he is eternal, omnipotent, knowing all things, and present every where.” †

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The

• Baghvat Geeta.

† Dow,

The idea of one superintending mind, capable of arranging and directing all the various operations of nature, is an attainment far beyond the powers of man in the more early stages of his progress. His theories, then, more suited to the limited sphere of his own observations, are not so refined. He supposes there is a distinct cause of every remarkable effect, and ascribes to a separate power every event, which attracts his attention, or excites his terror. He fancies it is the province of one Deity to point the lightning, and with an awful sound to hurl the irresistible thunderbolt at the head of the guilty ; that another rides in the whirlwind, and at his pleasure raises or stills the tempest ; that a third rules over the ocean ; that a fourth is the God of battles ; but, that while malevolent powers scatter the seeds of animosity and discord, and kindle in the breast those angry passions which give rise to war, and terminate in destruction ; others of a nature more benign, by inspiring the hearts of men with kindness and love, strengthen the bonds of social union, augment the happiness, and increase the number of the human race.* The mind of man thus opens slowly to abstract ideas.

An

* Robertson.

An invisible path is difficult to corporeal beings. †

But, as there is nothing so good, but it may be vitiated ; so there is nothing so bad, but it may be cherished. Nor was there ever a sect that could not boast of its martyrs to absurdity : hence, some of the Egyptians died fighting for the divinity of garlick, while others died fighting for the divinity of onions. The Hindoos carry every species of religious penance, and of self-torment, to an incredible extent. No bodily lacerations, no mental castigations, were ever more piously or more enthusiastically inflicted. The roastings, the whippings, the tearings, are almost beyond the possibility of enumeration. Of this, however, it is unnecessary to speak. The ideas of the Hindoos, concerning persons dedicated to holy purposes, are singular. In their Sacred Writings it is said, the Saniassies, who, from religion, quit their relations and every occurrence of this life, and who devote themselves to solitude and austerities, shall have no other clothing but what shall be necessary to cover their nakedness ; nor any other worldly goods than a staff in their hands, and a pitcher to drink out of ; that they shall always meditate on the

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truth

* Mahabarat,

truth contained in the Sacred Writings ; that their food shall be rice and other vegetables ; that they shall eat but once a-day, and then but sparingly ; that they shall look forward with desire to the separation of the soul from the body, and be indifferent about any thing concerning this life. Nearly to the same extent is the discipline of the Yogeys. Sanias, or a forsaking of the world, being the same with Yog, or the practice of devotion. “ Riches, and the life of man, are transient as drops of water on the leaf of the lotus.”*

The adoration which the Hindoos still pay to rivers, is now almost obliterated from every other part of the civilized globe. Yet, it was a custom peculiar to the Scythians, and to their descendants. They offered to them libations ; they threw into their streams, fruits, flowers, fleeces, and various sorts of viands. In many of the German sacrifices to rivers, even dreadful cruelties were practised. Procopius says, “ The Franks, under their king Thudibert, though converted to Christianity, immolated and offered up the wives and children of their enemies to the Pô at Pavia. In Iceland, sacrifices were offered to the genii of fountains and running waters.

* Mahabarat,

waters. The Illyrians transacted their most solemn affairs, under the auspices, and in the presence of their principal rivers. Horace says, the Romans offered sacrifices and presents to fountains. * Homer makes Achilles say, the glorious Scamander, to whom for ages you have immolated such profusion of bulls, and into whose waves you plunge living horses, shall not save you from my wrath. † The Phrygians, the Persians, and various other nations, all offered sacrifices to rivers. The oath that was taken in the name of the elements of water and fire, was the most solemn that could be administered. The most dreadful punishment was *aqua et igni interdicti*.

But, a still more atrocious prejudice continues exclusively rooted in the minds of the people of Hindostan. I mean that which, by an ordinance of their religion, makes it highly meritorious, if not an absolute duty, for a wife to devote herself to death on the funeral pile of her husband. This wretched dereliction from sense, from feeling, and from humanity, still keeps its ground among a mild and amiable race of beings. Nor can the hand of authority often prevent, much less eradicate it. This de-

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testable

* Carm. lib. iii. Od, 13. † Iliad xxi. v. 130.

testable practice had once an universal prevalence. I have spoken of it elsewhere;* and shall again, in the course of these enquiries, be under the painful necessity of displaying it in the whole glare of its deformity. This, likewise, was derived from the Scythians. "The obsequies of the Gauls," says Cæsar, "are sumptuous and magnificent; they cast into the flames all those things which had most pleased the deceased, even animals. Nor is it long since they burned with the body of a great chief, the clients and the slaves he had been most attached to." Pomponius Mela adds, "the Gaulish women made it a point of honour to burn themselves with their husbands, that by such means they might never be separated." The Gauls, by the way, however, you will recollect, were Celts, not Scythians. Among the Heruli the custom was the same. Among the Thracians, when polygamy was at its height, a noble emulation sprang up among the wives, who should have the honour of dying with the husband. The parents interested themselves in the cause; even the sages of the land were often obliged to interpose their authority, and to decide agreeably to the proof of the one who had been the best beloved.

In

* Philosophical Rhapsodies.

In short, all the Scythiac, as well as Celtic nations, had this horrible custom. Nor did they regard it but with delight and rapture. The birth of a child into the vale of sorrow, they bewailed as a bitter misfortune ; while at the extinction by death they rejoiced, as it promised an everlasting felicity.*

In regard to the arts and sciences of the Hindoos, it will be unnecessary to proceed further than we have gone already. It is not to be passed by, however, that although chariots are disused in battle at present, they are constantly mentioned in the ancient Sanskreet books, as a necessary part of an Hindoo army. † Fire-arms were used, and consequently the use of gun-powder was known by the Hindoos, ‡ centuries before the Romans had an existence, much less the idea of a catapulta. But, in all their perfection of astronomy, which I have so much dwelt upon, had the Hindoos a knowledge of the composition of glass ? Or if they had, had they the ability to apply it to astronomical purposes ? These are questions I acknowledge myself unable to answer : yet, it is certain that glass has been known, nearly, at least, 3000 years.

* Pellontier.

† Wilkins.

‡ Code of Gentoo Laws.

years. Job speaks of glass. * Solomon is decided on the subject : † nor is it in the Old Testament spoken of as a new invention. Pliny, then, it should seem, was wrong in giving the accidental discovery of glass to the Phœnicians, about the time of Solomon. But, what is still more curious, he makes the introduction of it at Rome, to be in the reign of Tiberius. Does this accord with the proofs in the Museum of Portici, which were dug out of Pompeia, and with which Pliny himself must have been familiar? You have seen the window-frame at Pompeia, which had large panes of glass in it. You have admired the false gems, likewise, from Herculaneum, which have a consistency so hard, that they will, like a diamond, cut other vitrifications. But, if glass could have been used, so shortly after the death of Tiberius, as to be applied to the common purposes of a window, may it not reasonably be imagined it was turned also to other uses? How are we to conceive the minute Cameos and Intaglios of the ancients to have been worked, unless the lapidaries were furnished with magnifiers ; for drops of water to look through, are rather too much for the stretch of common comprehension.

The

* Chap. xxviii. v. 17.

† Proverbs, c. xxiii. v. 31.

The cases of mummies, which have been brought from Egypt, shew to what a high degree of perfection chemistry had brought vitrification in that country. All the efforts of modern art can scarcely excel some of the ornaments of these mummies. In Siberia, beads, and coloured glass, have often been found. In all Scythiac countries, the *tumuli* have been seen to contain the same thing. But, the mummies so adorned, are at least 4000 years old. The art of making glass, indeed, seems certainly to have been lost for some time; and that the Romans were not early acquainted with it. Yet, Pliny himself, in a sort of contradiction to his first assertion, mentions a physician who was put to death about the time of Tiberius, for rendering glass *malleable*. He even tells us of a grand theatrical exhibition, given by Marcus Scaurus, during his ædileship, fifty-eight years before Christ, and that the front of the stage was of three stories; the first of marble, the second of glass, and the third of wood. But, in regard to the malleability of glass, so gravely related by Pliny, we have only to recollect, that no metallic substance can become transparent until it has passed into a state of calx or lime. Transparency and metallicity are in com-

2 patible

patible; and consequently, such pretended malleable glass can only be considered as a chimera.*

“Some traders in nitre,” says Pliny, “travelling through Phœnicia, stopped to dress their viands on the banks of the river Belus. Not finding stones on which to set their tripods, they placed them on little heaps of the nitre. The nitre took fire, and impregnating itself with the sand, it formed small currents of transparent liquid, which congealing, gave the first idea of glass. This was about a thousand years before the birth of Christ.” The grains of variously coloured glass, however, as I have said, which are to be seen on the cases of mummies, particularly on that of the British Museum, evince an infinitely higher antiquity of glass.

Heliodorus, in speaking of optics, remarks; first, that light always proceeds in a right line, if it be not stopped in its progress: secondly, that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection: thirdly, that the rays of light refract more or less, according to the density of the medium through which they pass: fourthly, that it is always in proportion to the angle of vision, that objects appear increased or diminished

* Sage.

nished in dimensions. He afterwards speaks of the phænomena which are occasioned by the passage of the rays of light, through diaphanous substances, such as glass, &c. This writer is, indeed, posterior to Ptolemy, whom he cites.* But, Aristophanes, and Aristotle, both speak of burning-glasses. Le Comte de Caylus leans to the belief, that telescopes were known to the ancients; and his reason is this: Strabo, in treating of the magnitude of certain of the stars, says, “vapours have the same effect that tubes have; they increase in appearance the magnitude of objects.”† We are told also, of long tubes made use of by Hipparchus; and of similar long tubes in ages of the most profound antiquity of the Chinese.‡ But, there is still a more unexceptionable evidence. Not far from the age of Strabo, Pompeia and Herculaneum were destroyed. In the ruins of these cities, some magnifying glasses in perfect preservation have been found, which are to be seen in the cabinet of the king of Naples. Seneca speaks of spherical glasses, which evidently served artists as microscopes. An ancient manuscript of Ptolemy represented an astronomer observing with a tube of many joints. History tells

* Anonym. Oxford, 1670.

† Lib. iii.

‡ Bailly.

tells us, that Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had an instrument placed on the Pharos of Alexandria, by which vessels might be discerned at a considerable distance from land. *

We are told that Archimedes, by means of a mirror, burnt a whole fleet. We know ourselves, that Buffon, by the means of mirrors, fused metals and other substances. But, it is said, the machines used by Archimedes were metallic, and concave, and had their focus by reflection; for that the ancients were unacquainted with the refracted foci of convex glasses. This I can neither deny nor affirm. But, in the Clouds of Aristophanes, we know Strepsiades tells Socrates of an expedient he had to pay his debts, which was by means of a round transparent stone or glass, used in lighting of fires, by which he intended to melt the bond, which in those days was written upon wax. Now, the glass or stone here used to light the fire, could not be, says De la Hire, concave, since a reflected focus, coming from below upwards, would have been very inadequate to the purpose: and the old scholiast of Aristophanes confirms the opinion. And, indeed, both Pliny and Lactantius seem to have believed the same; especially

* Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. t. i.

especially the latter, who says, that a glass sphere, full of water, and held in the sun, lighted the fire even in the coldest weather, which incontestibly proves the effects of concave glasses.

All this, however, is, I must confess, but little to our Hindoo disquisition. The oldest nations, I find, possessed the art of making vitrifications ; but I have neither positive ground of assurance, nor even the smallest gleam for conjecture, that the Hindoos ever used glasses for their astronomical observations. The precursors, indeed, of the Hindoos, might have had such a knowledge ; for ignorance at one period does not infallibly infer ignorance at another. And it is otherwise unaccountable, how they could have discovered, without the aid of glasses, that the milky-way is the union of the light of innumerable stars, imperceptible to the human eye ; or that the satellites of Jupiter and Saturn should have been known to them, while it was not until 1609 they were discovered by us moderns. Much less have I any proof that they had an acquaintance with the polarity of the needle. Many learned authors have asserted, indeed, that the Phœnicians had the use of the needle : they say it is mentioned
no

no less than six times in the Scriptures, under the word *pheninim*, supposed to be derived from *phenith*, to be turned towards any thing, to turn the face. The power of the magnet is also said to be described by Job, in *meshek*, or attraction. Homer, in speaking of the Phœnicians, alludes, it should also seem, to their having a knowledge of the compass. Their ships are poetically represented as having instinctive sense, and of knowing how to fly through the pathless sea, though the whole heavens should be in darkness.* The Chinese, we are assured also, have had a knowledge of the needle so long, that they have no records or notion of its antiquity. The instrument said to be contrived by Hoang-ti, which, without consulting the heavens, could point out the four cardinal points, is referred backwards to a period of more than 4400 years.†

* Odyssey, viii.

† P. Souciet.

LETTER LXX.

ALL the knowledge which Europe formerly had of the ancient world, came from the writings of the Greeks, or from the Romans, who copied from them. These people bequeathed materials ; but, they were ignorant of the nature, or at least of the extensive value of the legacy they bestowed. In the earliest accounts of the nations of the earth, we find only some circumscribed portions, the history of which has been deemed essential to hand down to posterity. But, because pride occasioned silence, are we to take selfish taciturnity for a proof that there were no other celebrated people, than those whom the Greeks and Romans thought proper to take notice of? How analogically might we exhibit instances of similar ignorance, were we to make deductions from similar premises ! The Persians, who were an older, and at one period as flourishing a nation as either the Greek or the Roman, say nothing in their history of the other considerable empires of the earth. The Hindoos, who were a civilized, a

vol. iv. X commercial,

commercial, and a warlike nation, long before the days of the legislator of the Jews, yet are silent in their annals on the subject of all others. The same may be said of the Chinese. Now, if a Persian, an Hindoo, or a Chinese, were only a very few years ago to have been asked, who were the inhabitants of the various parts of the globe? his answer would have been, He was really ignorant, but he understood it was stocked with a few straggling, wild, and uncultivated savages. Was not this precisely the case with the Greeks? They in general disdained the study of any other language than their own. Absorbed in their own vanity, self-complacency led them to brand all foreigners with the epithet *barbarian*; and nothing is so certain, as that absurdity is the child of ignorance, and the natural result of confinement, both physical and intellectual.

It was not until the full maturity of Grecian refinement, that the most polished nations of antiquity thought of investigating even the nature and powers of man. The Asiatics had arisen to the zenith of science, before the Greeks had learned their alphabet. In the more early ages of the world, while the forests that covered Europe, afforded a retreat to a few wandering tribes,

tribes, the inhabitants of Asia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extensive empires, the seat of the arts, of luxury, and of despotism. An ancient chronologist, quoted by Velleius Paterculus, observes, that the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Asia, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the accession of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of these great events happened one hundred and eighty-nine years before Christ, the former may be placed two thousand one hundred and eighty-four years before the same æra. The astronomical observations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.*

At the moment when the Greeks prided themselves as being the only great people upon earth, Solomon reigned in Palestine; Confutsee gave morality and good government to China; Persia exhibited every mark of culture and civilization; Hindostan was infinitely more enlightened than it is at this day; Egypt groaned under its vast antiquity; Phœnicia and Carthage spread themselves round the known world: even Romulus, with his band of freebooters,

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* Gibbon,

booters, was enriching himself by the pillage of knowledge from the more ancient and more refined Etruscans. How apt, therefore, the question, why do the greatest part of our modern writers, of all the academical seminaries of Europe, when they are employed in such researches as the antiquities of nations, rest contented with only what is delivered by the Greek and Latin authors?*

The answer is obvious. The education of the youth of all classes, throughout Europe, consists in the study of the Greek and Latin classics; and when they come to the higher links of this chain of learning, and are well versed in these two languages, the *ne plus* presents itself; and their future researches and lucubrations soar no higher.

It is very certain, that by limiting our studies to the Greek and Latin languages, we acquire a competent knowledge of those people: but, is it not equally certain, that by so doing we renounce all acquaintance with others? And why persevere in this predilection? The tyranny of the schools no longer exists. The hour is passed when we were compelled to as implicit a submission to the Roman letter, as ever our forefathers were to the Roman sword.

Let

* Dr. Parsons.

Let us, however, at the same time, in gratitude acknowledge, that had it not been for the preservation of these languages, the western world might still have been involved in darkness. It was necessary to have had occasion for receiving the Greek language and learning, which was conveyed to us after the sacking of Constantinople ; for had it not been for this, fable and tradition might have still been our only portion.

Asia, whose limits it is unnecessary to define, has given birth to some of the greatest monarchies of the world. It anciently was divided into many different empires, provinces, and states, of which, among the most conspicuous, were the Assyrian and the Persian. The Assyrian monarchy, according to Eusebius, lasted one thousand two hundred and forty years ; and according to Justin, one thousand three hundred years, down to the year of the world four thousand three hundred and eighty. The empire of Persia existed two hundred and thirty-two years, till the death of Darius, whom Alexander conquered. The empire of the Medes lasted two hundred and fifty-nine years, according to Eusebius, till the reign of Astyages, who was conquered by Cyrus the Great, who transferred the power from the Medes, and founded the Persian monarchy.

monarchy. The greater part of Asia, if not the whole, was under the dominion of the Scythians. We know that the division of it, called Asia Minor, was tributary to the Scythians, for upwards of one thousand five hundred years. Much obscurity, indeed, hangs upon the history of such early times. But this we learn from Scripture, that Babylon was built by Nimrod, Belus, or Baal, two thousand two hundred and four years before the birth of Christ, that is, one hundred and forty-four years after the deluge. And we have it confirmed by the authority of Callisthenes, a philosopher in Alexander's retinue, who wrote to Aristotle, that the Babylonians reckoned themselves to be at least of one thousand nine hundred and three years standing; which made their origin reach back to the year of the world one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one, or one hundred and fifteen years after the deluge.* Nimrod was the son of Chus, grandson of Cham, and great grandson of Noah.

All writers ascribe to Babel or Babylon, the most remote antiquity, and the most unrivalled magnificence. In this city stood the wonderful tower of Belus or Ham, by whom, according to

* Porphyry.

to Bishop Cumberland, celestial observations began to be made.* Newton admits, that this city was a square of one hundred and twenty furlongs, or fifteen miles on every side, compassed first by a broad and deep ditch, and then with a wall fifty cubits thick, and two hundred cubits high. Their silks, tapestries, embroideries, were universally celebrated. The Greeks, who were eager to be esteemed the authors and inventors of all arts and sciences, could yet never absolutely deny the Babylonians the honour of having laid the foundations of astronomy. The advantageous situation of Babylon, which was that of a wide extended flat country, where no mountains bounded the prospect; the constant clearness and serenity of the air, so favourable to the free contemplation of the heavens;† perhaps also the extraordinary height of the tower, which seems to have been intended for an observatory; all these might have been strong motives to engage this people to a more nice observation of the various motions of the heavenly bodies, and the regular course of the stars. L'Abbé Renaudot, in his Dissertation upon the Sphere,‡ observes, that the plain, which in Scripture is called Shinaar, and on

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which

* Origenes Gentium.

† Cicero.

‡ Mem. de l'Acad. des Sciences.

which Babylon stood, is the same as is called by the Arabians Sinjar, where the Caliph Almamon, the seventh of the Habassides, in whose reign the sciences began to flourish among the Arabians, caused the astronomical observations to be made, which for several ages directed all the astronomers of Europe ; and that the Sultan Gelladdin Melikschali, the third of the Seljukides, caused a course of like observations to be made near three hundred years afterwards, in the same place : whence it appears, that this place was always reckoned one of the fittest, in the then known world, for astronomical observations.

Of this famous city of Babylon, however, and of its rival in age Nineveh, not a remnant now is to be traced. How little duration in the fleeting monuments of the power of man ! to rivers in some cases, and to mountains in others, we are obliged to appeal, in order to ascertain where the former magnificence of the earth had been displayed. The kingdom of Persia, which we are next briefly to notice, in its ancient state extended from the Hellespont to the Indus, and from the Pontus to the shores of Arabia. Its sovereign, in the days of Abraham, was great in the scale of kings. Its earliest name was, that by which it is called by Moses in Genesis, Elam.

The

The Elamites were the ancestors of the Persians. It was likewise called Pars, or Phârs, and the Greek word Persis, and the Latin word Persia, are derived from this oriental denomination.* Even in the time of Darius, Greece did not contain the hundredth part of the square surface of the dominions of that sovereign. † Its provinces were many of them situated in the finest climates; fertilized by considerable rivers; embellished by flourishing cities; rich in the nature of their soil, in the industry of their inhabitants, in the activity of their commerce, and in their population, which continually encreased, from wholesome laws and good government, as well as from the other blessings conferred upon them by nature. ‡ Yet, almost to the last of the sovereigns of this great empire, the Persians of the court of Suza scarcely knew that such a people existed as the Athenians or Lacedemonians. §

With the Magi of Persia, all the world are acquainted. I have only, therefore, to say to you on their subject, that this power and influence were uncontrollable, not only in clerical, but in secular matters; that the king did not determine any important affair of the state, without their

* Hyde.

† D'Anville.

‡ Xenophon.

§ Herodotus.

their advice and opinion ; and hence Pliny remarks, that even in his time, they were looked upon, in all the eastern countries, as the masters and directors of princes, and of those who stiled themselves the kings of kings. These Magi were the sages, the philosophers, and men of learning in Persia ; as the Gymnosophists and Brahmans were among the Indians, and the Druids among the Gauls. Their great reputation made people come from the most distant countries, to be instructed by them ; and we are assured, it was from them that Pythagoras borrowed the principles of that learning, by which he acquired so much veneration among the Greeks ; excepting only his doctrine of transmigration, which he learned from the Egyptians, and by which he corrupted and debased the ancient doctrine of the Magi, concerning the immortality of the soul. Nor will it be unnecessary for you to remember, that their belief in a good and in a bad principle ; of the struggle which in consequence shall continue to the end of the world ; and of a general resurrection, and day of judgment, wherein all shall receive a just retribution according to their works ; with various other articles, are, though altered in many circumstances, strikingly analogous with the doctrine of the holy Scriptures.

These Persians, we are told, are not to be confounded with the Parthians, so renowned in story. The Parthians were originally Scythians. They were exiles; for, in the Scythiac language, exiles were called Parthi. “Parthi, penes quos, velut divisione orbis cum Romanis facta, nunc orientis imperium est, Scytharum exules fuere. Hoc etiam ipsorum vocabulo manifestatur. Nam Scythico sermone Parthi exules dicuntur. Hi domesticis seditionibus Scythia pulsi, solitudines inter Hyrcanium, et Dahas, et Arios, et Spartanos, et Margianos furtim occupavere. Sermo his inter Scythicum mediumque medius, et exutrisque mixtus.”* There is, in fact, much disagreement among authors, as to the particular nation or tribe to which the Parthians belonged. Curtius says, “the Scythians, known by the name of Parthians, came out of Europe; and Jornandes will have them to be Goths or Getæ. Their religion, however, it is certain, was the same with that of the Persians. †

In regard to the local position of Parthia also, very inaccurate ideas seem to have prevailed. Those whose knowledge of it is collected chiefly from its wars with the Romans, conceive Parthia
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* Justin.

† Universal History,

to be only the countries bordering upon the Euphrates and Tigris ; as their boundaries, on the extension of their empires, met those of the Romans. Hence Strabo has either been mistaken in this point, or has not fully expressed himself, when he describes the Parthians who defeated Crassus, as the descendants of those Carduchians, who gave so much trouble to Xenophon, during the celebrated retreat of the Greeks. It is probable, or at least possible, that the Parthians might have had in their army, at that time, some detachments from among those hardy mountaineers, as the Carduchi were then numbered among their subjects ; but the bulk of the Parthian army came from Persia, *their proper country*. The history of the Parthian geography is briefly this : Parthia proper was a small province, very near to the south east extremity of the Caspian sea ; which territory, after the division of Alexander's empire, fell to the share of the Seleucidæ, kings of Syria and of the east, about three hundred years before our æra. About fifty years afterwards, Parthia rebelled ; and together with Hyrcania, and other adjoining provinces, became an independent state, under Arsaces. As the empire of the Seleucidæ grew weaker, the Parthians extended their country westward ; and the fine province of Media, now
Irak

Irak Ajami, fell to them ; and within a century after the foundation of their state, it had swallowed up all the countries from the Indus to the Euphrates, Bactria included. The Parthian conquests in Armenia, about seventy years before Christ, brought them acquainted with the Romans ; whose conquests met theirs, both in that country and in Syria. The Parthians, together with their conquests, had advanced their capital westward, and had established it on the Tigris at Seleucia, or rather Ctesiphon, near the present Bagdad, before their wars with the Romans commenced. The particulars of their first wars with the Roman people, which continued about sixty-five years, are well known. During the time of the Roman emperors, they were continually compelled to retire, and daily lost ground in Armenia and Mesopotamia. Trajan penetrated to their capital ; and satisfied his curiosity by embarking on the Indian sea. The moderation of Adrian restored the ancient boundary of the Euphrates. In the year of Christ two hundred and forty-five, Persis, or Persia proper, which had hitherto ranked as a province of Parthia, gained the ascendancy ; and under Artaxerxes, put an end to the dynasty of the Arsacidæ, and restored the ancient name of Persia to the empire, after that of Parthia had existed

existed about four hundred and eighty years. So that in fact, the Parthian empire, considered generally, was the Persian, under another name. *

Included in this dominion, was a very large province in the greater Armenia, which was anciently called Ararat. This province was divided into various districts or lesser provinces. Mount Ararat was in this province, as well as the royal city of Valarsapeta, which at present goes under the name of Erivan. † The prophet Jeremiah represents the kingdom of Ararat, as part of the power which was to reduce Babylon. The Armenians, in fact, according to common opinion, must have been the inhabitants of the kingdom of Ararat, mentioned in Scripture. ‡ Included in the same dominion was also Arabia, a country which, in the earliest times, possessed persons learned in natural philosophy, astronomy, and other sciences, as is manifest from the conversations between Job and his friends. Now the Jews called Arabia the east country. Pythagoras, among the countries through which he travelled for instruction and knowledge, (for men, in these days, gained their knowledge like Ulysses, by visiting many cities, and conversing with

* Reynell.

† Moses Chorenensis.

‡ Universal History.

with many men) visited Arabia, and lived there with the king. †

It has been maintained as highly probable, that all the different alphabets now used in our continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, have had their original from the Hebrew alphabet. It is plain, say the advocates for this opinion, that the Chaldean and Syriac are formed from the Hebrew; and that the Egyptians, Arabians, and Greeks, had theirs from the Hebrews or Phœnicians, which were virtually the same: the Roman is plainly taken from the Greek; and the Gothic, Celtic, and all the western alphabets from the Greek and Roman. In short, we are desired not to doubt, but that the Runic, Punic, Chinese, Hindoo, Tartarian, as well as the Coptic alphabets, have been from the same original. So that all the nations who have had alphabets, have had them from the Hebrews; and none can be traced farther back than the time of receiving the law, when Moses compiled his history. This hypothesis, however, is not so free from error as is imagined. It would be shutting our eyes to truth, to acquiesce in the belief, that no nations were learned but those
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* Porphyrius.

who were mediately, or immediately, connected with the Israelites. We have, in very striking instances, had proof to the contrary; at the same time I will acknowledge, and we shall frequently have it in evidence, that an astonishing chain of analogy is to be discovered, running through many of the languages of the earth.

The Jews spoke the same language with the Phœnicians. It was, in its principles, the same with the Syrian and Arabic. They all may be called dialects of one general oriental tongue. The resemblance among these languages is remarkable. They are as closely allied, as the Spanish is to the Italian; or as the Greek of Ionia was to that of Athens. Bochart and Cumberland adduce proof of the similitude between the Hebrew and the Egyptian; and l'Abbé Barthélemy elucidates and strengthens the opinion. M. de Guignes, on this subject, says, “ the languages which were anciently spoken by the Hebrews, the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Chaldeans, and which are at this day spoken by the Arabs and the Ethiopians, were evidently offsprings of the same parent tongue. The whole of these people dipped in the same source; and that
source

source was the country where Moses tells us the first men were assembled. *

The Canaanites were certainly the same people, who are almost always called Phœnicians by the Greeks, of which foreign name no reason can be given, any more than of the oblivion of the true one. When the family of Noah, after the extravagant attempt of building the tower of Babel, dispersed themselves into different countries, Cham retired to Africa, and it doubtless was he who was afterwards worshipped as a god under the name of Jupiter Ammon. He had four children, Cush, Misraïm, Phut, and Canaan. Cush settled in Ethiopia; Misraïm, in Egypt, which generally in Scripture is called after his name, and after that of Cham his father; Phut took possession of that part of Africa which lies westward of Egypt; and Canaan, of the country which has since born his name. Historians are unanimously agreed, that Misraïm was the first king of Egypt, and that he began his reign two thousand one hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ. †

What language was the root of all these, it is impossible to discover. I neither presume to

VOL. IV.

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appeal

* Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.

† Rollin.

appeal to the Sanskreet, nor to the Hebrew. The Persian, however, which we are more immediately attending to, is indisputably as ancient as the earliest profane history extant ; nor need we any further proof than what I have already noticed, that the name Hindostan, or India, is not Sanskreet, but was derived by the Greeks from the old Persians. The present Persian, though mixed with some Arabic, is actually, we are informed, a dialect of the Gothic or Scythiac.* Is it not curious, that in Scythia, *Intra et Extra Imaum*, there should have been Chataë, Catti ; Sasones, Saxons ; Syebi, Suevi ; Tectosaces, Tectozaiges ; Jotæ, Jutes ; all coinciding with German names, and which could only spring from identity of language. Busbequius and others shew, that the peasants of Crim Tartary still speak the Gothic ! †

To the ancient Persians Europe is indebted (and it is an important fact) for almost all the fruits she possesses. What more certain proof of civilization and antiquity, than the culture of the products of the earth ? Virgil, and other ancient writers, inform us, that we are indebted to the expeditions of the Greeks into Persia, Armenia, and

* Scaliger, Lipsius, Boxborn, Burton.

† Pinkerton.

and Media, for the citron, apricot, and peach trees. The wars of the Romans in Pontus afforded Lucullus an opportunity of introducing the cherry-tree into Rome from Cerasus. Nor let us moderns be ashamed to acknowledge, we have plumbs from Damascus, pears from Greece, figs from Egypt, and pomegranates from Carthage. The Romans introduced grapes into Gaul. The English had no melons, till the time of James I. In the same reign, gooseberries, sallads, and cabbages, were brought from Flanders. Sir Walter Raleigh had before introduced potatoes. Asparagus, cauliflowers, artichokes, oranges, and lemons, were never seen in England, as the produce of the soil, till after the time of the Restoration. Of such recent date is a great part of European cultivation.

It was not so with the ancient people we are speaking of. The Egyptians, for instance, did not know the antiquity even of the emblem of plenty, or whence it was derived. Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the time of Julius Cæsar, and was in Egypt about fifty-five years before the birth of Christ, says, “Some of the Egyptians were of the opinion, their Apis was adored, because the soul of Osiris, after his death, had passed into it; and others, because a certain person of the name of

Apis had collected the scattered members of Osiris, after he had been murdered by Typhon, and put them into a bull made of wood. But the most probable reason is, that the bull, with its essential mark of a crescent, was taken emblematically as the sun and moon, or Isis and Osiris; for these two divinities not only presided over, and originally had taught their subjects agriculture, and the cultivation of the earth; but one was considered as the principle of energy and heat; and the other of passiveness and moisture, by which all things were brought into being.

The bull, indeed, was the emblem of plenty, among the Scythians and Persians, as it was among the Egyptians, and as it is at this day among the Aborigines of Hindostan. Hence, perhaps, the Grecian fables of the Minotaur vanquished by Theseus, with the assistance of Ariadne; the bulls of Gerion; those of Angias; and those whom Jason was under the necessity of subduing before he could arrive at the golden fleece. Adonis was worshipped in Phœnicia, under the figure of a bull. The Phallus, and the Priapus of the Greeks, originated probably in the same principle. The practice even was common of figuring the ocean, impetuous rivers, torrents, &c. by the emblem of a bull. The
Hindoos,

Hindoos, from the earliest period of their history, have given to the cavern whence the Ganges issues, the name of the Cow's Mouth.

Besides the nations we have already mentioned, the immense empire of China presents itself: an empire, whose present state, now so well authenticated, gives credibility to whatever may have been said even of Babylon. How prodigious the dominion, which can be computed to contain more inhabitants than all the kingdoms of Europe put together! The most learned authors contend, that the Seres of the ancients and the Chinese are the same. The fabric silk, which came from that country, was in consequence called *Serica*. “*Sericum dictum quia id Seres primi miserunt; vermiculi enim ibi nasci perhibentur à quibus hæc circum arbores fila ducuntur.*” * Ptolemy connects *Serica* with *Scythia extra Imaum*, to which it was adjacent. According to him, and to the author of the Ancient Geographical Table agreeing with him, it was bounded on the west by *Scythia extra Imaum*, on the north by *terra incognita*, and on the south by *India extra Gangem*. Is it not probable, therefore, it was part of that country, called by the Tartars *Kithaï*? Pliny, indeed, calls it, a

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country

* Isidore.

country of Upper Aisa, bordering on the north west of the Chinese wall. Procopius also takes notice, that silk was brought from Serinda, a country in India, in the time of Justinian, in the sixth century. But this could not have been the old city of Sirhind, which lies midway between Delhi and Lahore. Moreover, history takes no notice of manufactures of silk at Sirhind.*

China, therefore, as it is now called, we will admit to have been the ancient Serica. The western Tartars call it Kithai; and this name was in use among the Asiatic Scythians, in the time of Alexander, as may be gathered from Curtius and Strabo. Be this, however, as it may, in the six hundred and thirty-seventh year of Christ, the Scythians, we are told, under the conduct of Madyes, first made an irruption into the Upper Asia.† From the country of the Seres silk was brought into Persia, and from Persia into Greece and Italy. It was introduced into Greece on Alexander's conquest of Persia. Florus says, "the Seres were years on their journey." But that which is most extraordinary, and which affords a striking proof of the imperfect communication of the ancients with remote nations,

* Rennell,

† Universal History.

tions, and of the slender knowledge they had of foreign natural productions or arts, is, that much as the manufactures of silk were admired, and often as silk is mentioned by the Greek and Roman authors, they had not, for several centuries after the use of it became common, any certain knowledge, either of the countries to which they were indebted for this favourite article of elegance, or of the manner in which it was produced. *

Augustus, indeed, while he continued at Tarracon, received an embassy from the Seres; and we are told, he entertained a project of making discoveries on the side of Arabia, and on the coasts of the Indian seas. He was tempted to this, by the prospect of getting access to the rare and costly commodities, which the Arabians were known to derive from the East, and which they sold in the markets of Egypt and Asia at their own valuation. Heliogabalus was the first Roman emperor, who wore a dress of silk, which, at that time, was sold for its weight in gold. Strabo informs us, that in the port of Nus, there were upwards of one hundred ships from India.

The dilatory commerce, that was carried on with China, was often interrupted and rendered dangerous by the Parthians, who had acquired possession of all the provinces which extend from the Caspian sea to that part of Scythia which borders on China. This intercourse the Romans endeavoured to render more secure, by a negociation with one of the monarchs of that great empire. Of this singular transaction there is no vestige, indeed, in the Greek or Roman writers; our knowledge of it is derived entirely from the Chinese historians, by whom we are informed, that An-toun, (the emperor Marcus Antoninus) the king of the people of the western ocean, sent an embassy with this view to Oun-ti, who reigned over China in the hundred and sixty-sixth year of the Christian æra.*

In the prosecution of this trade, it is evident, that a considerable part of the extensive countries to the east of the Caspian sea must have been traversed. From the information procured from the adventurers in this traffic, Ptolemy was enabled to give a scientific description of those inland and remote regions of Asia. † The farthest point towards the east, to which his knowledge of this part extended, was Sera Metropolis,

* De Guignes-

† Lib. vi. c. 11. 28.

tropolis, which, from various circumstances, appears to have been in the same situation with Kant-cheou, a city of some note in Chen-si, the most westerly province of the Chinese empire. This he places in the longitude of 177 degrees 15 minutes, near three degrees to the west of Sinæ Metropolis, which he had described as the utmost limit of Asia discovered by sea. Ptolemy, likewise, received some more general information concerning various nations towards the north, which, according to the position he gives them, occupied parts of the great plain of Tartary, extending considerably beyond Lassa, the capital of Thibet, and the residence of the Dalai Lama.*

Yet the erroneous ideas of many intelligent writers of antiquity, with respect to the Caspian sea, are so remarkable, and afford such a striking example of the imperfection of their geographical knowledge, that it may not be improper to enumerate a few of them: According to Strabo, the Caspian is a sea which communicates with the great Northern Ocean, whence it issues at first, by a narrow strait, and then expands into a sea, extending in breadth five hundred stadia. With him Pomponius Mela agrees, and describes the

* Robertson.

the strait by which the Caspian is connected with the ocean, as of considerable length, and so narrow, that it had the appearance of a river. Pliny likewise gives a similar description of it. In the age of Justinian, this opinion concerning the communication of the Caspian with the ocean was still prevalent. Some early writers, by a mistake still more singular, have supposed the Caspian Sea to be connected with the Euxine. Quintus Curtius, whose ignorance of geography is notorious, has adopted this error. Arrian, though a judicious writer, and though by residing for some time in the Roman province of Cappadocia, of which he was governor, he might have obtained more accurate information, declares in one place, the origin of the Caspian Sea to be still unknown, and is doubtful whether it was connected with the Euxine, or with the great Eastern Ocean which surrounds India. In another place he asserts, there was a communication between the Caspian and the Eastern Ocean. These errors appear the more extraordinary, as a just description had been given of the Caspian Sea, by Herodotus, near five hundred years before the age of Strabo. "The Caspian," says he, "is a sea by itself, unconnected with any other. Its length is as much as a vessel with oars can go in fifteen days; its greatest breadth, as much as it

it can sail in eight days." Aristotle describes it in the same manner, and, with his usual precision, contends it ought to be called a great lake, not a sea. And Diodorus Siculus concurs with both.*

Of what the Romans were ignorant, however, we are now informed. But, I will not fatigue you upon this subject. The celebrated chain of mountains, called the Caucasus, extends from the Black Sea to the Caspian; then descending towards the south, and stretching beyond the Caspian, it bends under the name of Imaus: it thence continues through all that part of Asia, and reaches to China. This chain forms the natural division of Asia; it separates the northern from the southern regions. It, at this hour, serves as the boundary of Tartary. Heretofore it was the division of Scythia; and thence the denomination *Intra & Extra Imaum*. The Caucasus and Imaus are but continuations of Taurus. On Caucasus Jupiter had Prometheus bound for his daring abilities, in climbing the heavens, and stealing fire from the chariot of the sun, and for rejecting Pandora, with the rich and mysterious box, which she had received from the Gods. This Prometheus was descended from one of the Oceanides, and was brother to Atlas. According to Apollodorus,

* Robertson.

Apollodorus, he made the first man and woman that ever were upon the earth, with clay, which he animated by means of the fire he had stolen from heaven. To him, it is said, mankind are indebted for the invention of many of the useful arts : he taught them the use of plants with their physical power ; and from him they received the knowledge of taming and domesticating animals, and of cultivating the earth.

The various nations, who spread themselves along the sides, and at the feet of these elevated mountains, are, in many instances, so obscurely identified in regard to locality, that it would be no very amusing, nor in any respect, a very instructive research, to pursue them individually. I take them, in the aggregate, to have been anciently belonging to, or in a great measure dependent upon, the Scythian empire : for the Scythians, it is more than probable, were a mixture of people necessarily perhaps blended under one general designation. For, was not this the case under the dominion of the Assyrians and the Persians ? Was it not the case, in indeed another part of the world, under the Romans ? Who ever contended that the empire of the Moguls was to be taken as over one people, speaking the same language, and with the same feature

feature and national character? Europeans call the people of the east, indiscriminately, Indians. The Aborigines and the Colonists of the western world are, at this hour, called by one name, Americans.

As the whole universe suffers a continual rotation, and nature seems to delight in it, so is there in the minds and actions of men a natural restlessness, which inclines them to change of place, and to the shifting of their habitations. Thus the families and nations of the world have been in a continual fluctuation, roaming about on the face of the globe, driving and driven out by turns. What numbers of colonies have been sent abroad! The world is a great wilderness, wherein mankind have wandered, and jostled one another about from the creation: and it would be difficult to point out the country, which is at this day in the hands of its first inhabitants. No original stock is perhaps any where to be traced.

Nations are frequently as blind as individuals. They traverse the road of life with their eyes closed. They neither stop to consider the past, the present, nor the future. The ascertaining, therefore, the first inhabitants of a country, is a problem

problem that all the subtilty of man will never be able to resolve. It may be compared, with considerable aptitude, to the question, which was first, the egg or the chicken? In antiquarian researches, consequently, there would be less barrenness of certitude, were it to be enquired, not who first peopled such and such countries, but, who conquered, enlightened, or instructed the defenceless or the ignorant of such uncultivated regions? Nor would the task be so laborious as may be imagined. Thus, in the instance of language, beside the names of things common to all nations, as fire, air, earth, water, hills, rivers, and vallies, the uses of which are universally understood, and so may be supposed not to stand in need of any arbitrary appellations whatever, there are other words, which depend upon skill in physics, astronomy, geometry, agriculture, architecture, habits, wars, customs, domestic purposes, and religions, &c. which cannot be supposed in any nation, before the use of the thing itself, and that particular science be introduced. When we see two or more nations agreeing in these circumstances, therefore, we may rationally conclude, that the more learned nations may not only have communicated the names, but also the things themselves: and we see to this day, the invention of arts and sciences, to the
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great honour of industrious people, preserved entire in the language of the first inventors.

All nations have been once in that state which is denominated barbarous. And they all have been so, because they were once young, and like young children, had nothing worth recording, or, which is most probable, were incapable of recording, even though they had traits which were worthy of notice. Excepting the Jewish, we have no connected history of any ancient nation. All we have is a meagre fragment, a traditionary tale, or an astronomical calculation. Yet it is a feature indelible in the character of societies in general, to boast of an illustrious and remote extraction, and to solace themselves with the splendour of their ancestors, and the antiquity of their origin. Notwithstanding this, we know there must be legitimate elders of a family, and that they in course are to be respected. But, at the same time, it should not be forgotten, that the honour of one half of the species is not to be sacrificed to that of the other. We are as stones hewn from the same quarry, and therefore, though the Greek and Roman superstructures may be seemly, it is not fair that the broad and solid foundations on which

which they were reared, should be utterly buried in oblivion.

Societies are like the winds, that come we know not whence, and blow whithersoever they list. Their forms are derived from obscure and distant origins. They arise long before the date of philosophy, from the instincts, not from the speculations of men. And thus, as has been remarked, nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of systematic design.* The seeds of every situation are lodged in human nature; they spring up and ripen with the season. The prevalence of a particular species is often derived from an imperceptible ingredient mingled in the soil.† At the same time, nothing is so clear, as that the intercourse of one people with another has the same happy effect on the national character, that the intercourse of individuals has on the personal. Prejudices are dispelled; mutual communications are made; emulation is kindled; and a finer edge given to the faculties of the mind. A sequestered nation, like a solitary individual, can never be highly improved or refined. Variety and diversity of character

* De Retz.

† Ferguson.

character call forth intellectual exertions ; acuteness directs application ; research affords materials for philosophy ; fancy embellishes the ground work of reason ; taste becomes the guide of genius ; good sense governs the eccentric excursions of imagination ; different tempers of men strike fire by collision : thus arts flourish, science improves, and individuals and nations, from a discordancy of character, find the true harmony of the social system.

It is, and perhaps very wisely, recommended to us, by some profound philosophers, to limit our inquiries to the present, or at most to the recent state of things, and not to look further. I will at last, though I cannot, I am afraid, do it with a very good grace, profit by the hint. At the same time, I must be pardoned for believing, and for again asserting, that the more comprehensive the view of any subject, the better we are enabled to generalize and to simplify. The accumulation of facts, from which no general principles can be inferred, merely because they are facts, or by which no important truth is to be confirmed, is, I will acknowledge, altogether useless. But, on the other hand, it must be allowed, that the sum of certain knowledge is too small to justify the neglect or contempt of

any accession to it, however apparently insignificant. Whether one man takes a short cut, or another a round-about way, the point is still the same; and all to be attended to, is, that the errors of the one may not be more than the errors of the other. *Vitiis sine nemo nascitur, optimus ille est qui minimis urgetur.*

I have already observed, that certain nations in Scythia, *intra & extra Imaum*, had the same appellative distinctions with certain of our Teutonic nations of Europe. It is worthy of remark also, that the country between the Euxine and the Caspian Sea was named Iberia and Albania, that is, the east and west countries, the seas lying nearly east and west of each other; in the same manner as the two islands of Britain and Ireland, which also received the Phœnician names of Iberia and Albania on the same account.* Not, that this last idea has not been contradicted, for it is contended, that Britain was called by the ancient Greeks, *Αλβίων*, and by the Phœnicians, *Barat-anac*, from the abundance of tin in it; or in another interpretation, from the Phœnician word *alben*, white, or *alpin*, high land. †

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* Vallancey.

† Sammes.

The word Albion is Scythiac, not Celtic. Under the name of Alani was comprehended a great variety of nations. Their inhabitants began on the eastern side of the Don, whence they extended over the vast deserts of Scythia, as far as the Ganges.* They were a Caucasian people, and the same with the Albani, some of whom migrated to the eastward. The only people, I believe, who can answer this description in the east, are the Affghans, who pretend that their founder removed from the mountains of Armenia to those of Candahar.† The name Alani, however, was seldom used in the extensive sense adopted by Marcellinus, but is generally applied to those nations who inhabited the northern slope of Caucasus, from Mount *Besh Tau*, to the Caspian. The country of the Albany, properly so called, was beyond the river Alazonius, and thence to the Caspian. These were an original people, simple and honest. They were the handsomest of mankind, and brave, though inoffensive. They fought on foot, and on horseback, with light or heavy armour, and brought into the field against Pompey an army of seventy thousand infantry, and twenty-two thousand horse. Their arms

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were

* Ammianus Marcellinus.

† Gaerber. Dr. Reinegg.

were spears, bows, and arrows, with shields, breast-plates, and helmets.* To the east of Colchis was Iberia, comprehending the present kingdom of Imoretia. It was well inhabited, had many villages and towns, with brick houses, regularly built, and public edifices. The Iberians of the vallies were peaceable and fond of agriculture; the mountaineers subsisted by pasturage, and were warlike and ferocious.

Georgia comprehends the ancient Iberia, Colchis, and perhaps a part of Albania. It is subject to Heraclius. This whole country is so extremely beautiful, that some fanciful travellers have imagined they had here found the situation of the original Garden of Eden. The hills are covered with forests of oaks, ash, beech, chestnuts, walnuts, and elms; incircled with vines, growing perfectly wild, but producing vast quantities of grapes. Cotton grows spontaneously, as well as the finest European fruits. Rice, wheat, millet, hemp, and flax, are raised on the plains, almost without culture. The vallies afford the finest pasturage in the world; the rivers are full of fish; the mountains abound in minerals, and the climate is delicious; so that nature seems to have lavished on this favoured country,

* Caucasian Nations.

country, every production that can contribute to the happiness of its inhabitants. A few squalid wretches, half naked, half starved, and driven to despair by the merciless oppression of their lords, are, however, the only people who are now thinly dispersed over the most beautiful provinces of Georgia.*

These Georgians, Albanians, Iberians, Bactrians, Persians, and others of the vast Scythiac dominions, spread themselves abroad in all quarters of the eastern world, and found their way into Europe by a variety of channels. The tide of emigration rolled impetuously from the spacious highlands, which are situated between China, Siberia, and the Caspian Sea. Hence descended those irresistible torrents, which rushed over all the soil, now the Land of Christians. But, what motives, say you, could have suggested migration to inhospitable regions? Southern Europe, you can easily suppose visited by armies even before she possessed the means of recording events. But, what could induce men to quit the genial climate of Scythia, for the then rude and boisterous shores of the Baltic?

LETTER LXXI.

AT the time when the Roman commonwealth was arrived at the highest pitch of power, and saw all the then known world subject to its laws, an extraordinary exertion of Pompey, in the Mithridatic war, caused the leader of a Scythiac nation, situated between the Pontus Euxinus, and the Caspian Sea, to seek, with his followers, a settlement in a more distant country. The name of this man was Sigge, but, he assumed, or had bestowed upon him, that of Odin, who was the supreme Divinity of the Caucasians. His people were called Asæ. His march he directed towards the north and west of Europe; and at length, with his multitudes, he settled in Denmark, Norway, and other districts of the Scandinavian territory.* Nor is this, as it has been stiled, an allegory. We read distinctly, that, “cum Pompeius dux quidam Romanorum orientem bellis infestaret, Odinus ex Asia huc in septen-

* Bartholin.

septentrionem fugiebat." † The apotheosis of Odin, or Wodin, was effected shortly before the death of Cæsar. And, therefore, we may consider Odin, not only as the legislator, and the father of the arts among these northern tribes, but as their adopted god of war also. When they went to battle, they offered vows and sacrifices to him, as the Romans did to Mars. The fourth day of the week, they consecrated to him, under the denomination of Wodens-dach, or Wednesday.

There were in ancient Europe, we are told, four grand races of men. The northern and western parts, however, were chiefly Celtæ; for Ephorus, who lived before the reign of Alexander the Great, says, Celtica was of a prodigious extent; and that the most ancient Greeks comprehended two thirds of Europe under the name of Celto-Scythæ. The four grand races were, first, the Celts, the most ancient inhabitants that can be traced; and who were to the other races what the Aborigines of America are to the European settlers there. Secondly, the Iberi of Spain and Aquitania, who were Mauri, and had passed from Africa. Thirdly, the Sarmatæ, who were, in all appearance, originally pos-

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sessor

† Hist. Germ.

sessors of South West Tartary. Fourthly, the Scythians, who originated from present Persia ; and spread thence to the Euxine, and almost over all Europe. In ancient authors, these grand races of men are marked and clear; the chief distinction of the four languages still remains to certify them. The Celtic is spoken by the Welsh. The Iberian still partly survives in the Basque and Mauritanic. The Sarmatian is the vast Slavonic tongue. The Scythian comprehends the other nations, but especially the Germans and Scandinavians, whose speech is less mixed.* Cæsar's description of Gaul every one knows. "Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres. Quarum unam incolunt Belgæ; aliam Aquitani; tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus, inter se differunt." †

In the opinion of other learned men, however, Europe received its first colonies from three distinct bodies of emigrants; that is, the inhabitants of the west and south from one; those of the east from another; and those of the north and midland parts from a third. They considered the universal inhabitants of the several countries of uncultivated Europe, as of these
three

* Pinkerton.

† Bell. Gall.

three distinct races, the Celtæ, the Sarmatæ, and the Scythæ. The Celtæ, or as they were frequently called by the Greeks and Roman, Celts, Gauls, and Gallatæ, appear, both from sacred and profane history, to have been the first who replenished with inhabitants the wilds of Europe, after the destruction of the old world by water. The Sarmatæ were apparently descended from the ancient inhabitants of Persia, Media, Phrygia, Armenia, and the other countries of Asia Minor. They settled themselves in the ancient Sarmatia Europea, that is Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, and the greatest part of Turkey. The Scythæ were descended from the Scythæ of Asia, who, in former ages, inhabited all the country at present distinguished by Great Tartary and Russia, the ancient Scythia Asiatica. Newton supposes, they made their first migration into Europe about six hundred and thirty-five years before Christ, in the period when their southern brethren invaded the Medes and Assyrians. *

“The great *Officina Gentium*,” says Richardson, “whence such myriads have at different periods poured into the other regions of the earth, appears, with the utmost probability, to have been Tartary. From the oldest times, they

* Vallancy.

they were remarked for a roving, irregular, and martial life, and went under the general names of Tartars, Scythians, or Juranians. Chance, oftener than design, might have shaped their course ; for every quarter of the world has, at different times, been the theatre of Tartar establishment, or plunder." But few circumstances have been less attended to, than a proper distinction between the ruder and more polished people, who fill the immense extent of what we now call Tartary, which is a name, by the way, not older than the fifth century. Men totally dissimilar have been grouped together under one indiscriminate character, merely because they have been known in Europe by one general name. The Scythians of our ancient histories, who are said to have invaded the kingdom of the Medes six hundred and thirty-five years before Christ, were those who formed the Persian nation, and are now known by the name of Touranians. Others were of different characters, and very essentially unlike in social and civilized propensities.

The use and the abuse of reason, which so variously shapes, and so artificially composes the manners and opinions of nations, is readily to be traced in their tempers, their customs, and their laws,

laws. But the operation of instinct is still more readily to be traced than that of reason. It is much easier to ascertain the appetites of an uncultivated being, than the speculations of a philosopher. The savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of the inferior classes of animation, preserve a stronger resemblance to themselves, and to each other, than the more refined, political, and scientific. The natural consequence of the imperfection of faculties, is the uniform stability of manners. Societies are, indeed, begun by instinct, but they are improved by experience. The necessity of natural, precedes that of artificial society. And hence, as the vegetable springs from a tender shoot, and the animal from an infant state; so man, in his collective, as well as in his individual capacity, advances to improvement by degrees. The inventions of art, and the discoveries of science, legislative wisdom, and the perfection of domestic institutions, are not sudden acquisitions, but the gradual growth of time and experience, the slow productions of enquiry, and the investigation of ages.

Tacitus represents the ancient Germans as avowed enemies to peace. Florus, speaking of the Sarmatæ, says, “ They were ignorant of its
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very name." Quintus Curtius tells us, "the ancient Scythians went always armed." In short, they are presented to us, as Hobbes would universally represent mankind; or to use his own words, "The state of civil society, respecting each other, is a natural state, or state of enmity; so that if a war should be discontinued, it is not, properly speaking, a permanent peace, but a suspension of arms." This, however, is not only too general, but too unqualified an assertion, as we shall afterwards have occasion to shew more particularly. We are now to consider the great tide of European population, which rolled directly from the plains of Shinaar to the very verge of the Atlantic, and which consequently presupposes, that no country could have been primarily peopled from the west. *

An accurate ancient geographer † informs us, the old Greek historians gave the name of Scythians, and Celto-Scythians, to all the inhabitants of the northern regions, though it is plain, a very considerable part of them were properly Celtes. And in the same book he adds, that those people who inhabited beyond the Caspian Sea, which should be Scythians, were, by the

* Whitaker.

† Strabo.

the same Greek historian, called Sacks and Massagetes, though the former of these names at least only belonged to the Celts. For these reasons, many learned men have reckoned them as one people, branched out into that variety of names and characters, under which they are distinguished in history. But Josephus's authority has been more generally received, who affirms the Celts or Gauls, to be a different people. Names were varied, no doubt, among the ancient writers: and hence the number under which these people go. The word Celtæ, however, in Greek *κελται*, or *κελται*, signifying horsemen in Homer and Pindar, might be given on account of their expertness in horsemanship.* The ancient Celtic dominion included the regions of Illyria, Germany, Gallia, Spain, the Britannic, and other northern isles, who all spoke the same language, though split into various dialects; and made but one large nation, though divided, in process of time, into a great multitude of tribes.†

All Europe, and the far greater part of Asia, were peopled by those two celebrated nations, the Celts and the Scythians: the former almost wholly by the Celts, that is, from the utmost

VOL. IV. parts

* Goodwin.

† Cluverius.

parts of Spain to Scythia Europea, eastward; and the latter, thence to the territories of China. So that the whole extent of these nations, reached from the tenth degree west, to the eighth degree east longitude; and in latitude from the fortieth degree, quite up to the Arctic Circle. The first rank was always given to the Scythians. *Scytharum gens antiquissima*, was a common proverb among the ancients. But so considerable, on the other hand, was the Celtic nation, even in Augustus Cæsar's time, though greatly abated of its former grandeur, that it contained no less than sixty great people, distinctly identified according to Strabo; and sixty-four, according to Tacitus. But what was this to the idea we are to form of their power in their expedition into Italy, in the time of Tarquin the Elder, six hundred years before Christ, when Bellovesus, as the formidable precursor to Hannibal, having penetrated through the Alps with a numerous army, over-ran Italy?*

Strabo, indeed, says, "all the authors his contemporaries, as well as those who preceded him, were far from being perfectly acquainted with the Celts; the general denomination given by the Greeks to the nations who inhabited the
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* Universal History.

shores of the Danube to the Euxine, and to the very extremity of the north, was Celto-Scythian. The Celts were what the ancients called Hyperboreans. * With these, it is true, the Scythians were frequently confounded; and hence the reason why the Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, Muscovites, Istrians, Corinthians, and those who spoke the Sclavonian language, were called Celts, though they were the descendants of the Scythians." "The Medes," says Pellontier, but he says it rather incautiously, "seem to have derived their origin from the Sarmatæ, and the Persians from the Celts: the language of the Celts, indeed, their religious rites, and their domestic customs, differed little from those of the Persians. Pliny could not conceive how the people of Great Britain, who were so distantly situated from the Persians, should yet have so strong a resemblance to them in manners, &c. †.

All the Teutonic nations seem to have been colonies, or at least to have been enlightened and civilized by the Scythians. The *capite in rotundum raso*, is even considered at this day among the Poles, as a certain indication of their Asiatic

* Tacitus.

† Lib. xxx.

Asiatic origin.* The Huns and Bulgarians, who may be looked upon as one and the same people, were of the same stock.† The Goths and Vandals were of Scythiac descent; and the Lombards are supposed to have been of the same family.‡ Zosimus, and the Greeks, give the name of Scythians to those whom Jordanes and the Latin writers constantly represent as Goths. And yet we have seen ingenuity and learning exhausted in proving the Celts of Gaul to be the colonizers of almost all the rest of the world. In a book dedicated to Louis XIV. it was attempted to be proved, that the Vandals were from Provence and Dauphiny, the Britons from Anjou, the Germans from Auvergne, the Goths from Gevaudan, the Lombards from Langres, the Huns from Burgundy, the Turks, Persians, and Scythians, from the more southern and northern provinces of France; in a word, that Gaul was the first region of Europe inhabited after the deluge; that Greece and Rome were civilized and instructed by her philosophers; and that Phœnicia herself derived her knowledge from colonies from the banks of the Loire.

Gaul,

* Coxe: † Amm. Marcell.

‡ Procopius.

Gaul, indeed, was very early and very powerfully peopled. During the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, as I have already said, that is five hundred years before Cæsar was born, Ambigatus, king of the Celtic Gaul, finding his territories to be overstocked with inhabitants, or panting, more probably, after conquest, sent his two nephews, Bellovesus and Sigovesus, at the head of considerable armies, in quest of settlements in foreign countries. The province allotted to Bellovesus was Italy; and that to Sigovesus, the Hercynian forest.* We are told, however, that these ancient Gauls were Nomades, and that, like the Scythians, they learned the manner of cultivating the earth, of dressing the vine, and of planting the olive, from the Greeks of Marseilles, who colonized there from Phocia, about 600 years before Christ.† These Phocians, or Asia Minor Greeks, we are also informed, spread the like instruction among the Italians and Spaniards. Yet, even in the days of Strabo, the fellow-traveller of the great Pompey, the Gauls, though much addicted to wine, had not arrived at the point of making it themselves. What they had they brought from Italy.

It was only about the time of this writer, it is certain, that the Celtic nations became intimately to be known. "It is now, says he, that something with certainty can be said of the Britons, the Germans, and the Celtic tribes; and we may now say, that the world is laid open to us. The expeditions of Alexander the Great presented to observation a considerable part of Asia, and of Northern Europe. Mithridates and his Generals have caused all the countries that lie above the Palus Mæotis to be explored. The Romans themselves have pushed their knowledge as far as the Elb; and by means of the Parthians, we have become acquainted with Hyrcania, Bactriana, and the Scythians, who stretch beyond them to the east."

Much as it has been the wish of some to exalt the nations of the Celts, they have been as unjustly decried by others. The Celts, says one author, had no monuments, any more than the savage Americans and Samoiedes. The God Baal, Bell, or Bellenus; the transmigration of souls; their cosmogony and theogony, are all wholly Phœnician: what their own mythology was, we know not; but in all probability it resembled that of the Hottentots, or others of the rudest savages, as the Celts anciently were, and
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are little better at present, being incapable of any progress in society.* But, where, or when, the Celts were discovered to be so intellectually debased, is still to be demanded. Proof, on the contrary, is to be thus shewn, that many nations of the Celtic race were, in old times, highly distinguished even for works of genius: the most ancient colonies of Italy were Celts. The Gauls (although Cæsar in his division gives but a third part of Gallia to the Celts) were Celts. Pausanias says, “ that Celts was their common original name; and that Γαλαται and Galli were bestowed upon them by the Greeks. The Helvetians were Celts, who had, previous to their irruption into Switzerland, inhabited the banks of the Rhine, and the regions of the Hyrcanian forest.† Cæsar calls them the bravest of the Gallic people.

We are told, indeed, that the Celts had neither cities, nor towns, nor any residences which could fairly be called fixed habitations; that they despised industry, and looked even upon agricultural occupations as beneath the dignity of warriors. And all this may possibly have been true, in regard to certain classes of the Celts. Many of the Germans were found even

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* Pinkerton.

† Tacitus.

so late as the fourth century, in the very same situation. Cæsar expressly informs us, that the Gauls (and he might have ventured to have said the same thing of his own countrymen) were not permitted to continue in one place above a year at a time. Tacitus, a century and a half afterwards, corroborates what Cæsar had said. Notwithstanding all which, there were indisputably established cantons among the Celts. Cæsar himself says, there were some strong cities in Gaul. Nay further, he acquaints us, that on the invasion of the Cimbri, nearly sixty years previous to his Gallic expedition, the Gauls finding themselves unequal to a contest in the field, betook themselves to their strong-holds and cities. The Spaniards, we know, had cities when the Carthaginians arrived among them. The Illyrians and Thracians had cities before the days of Alexander the Great.

To the people who could emigrate in myriads, and who could not only conquer but colonize various countries at the same time, it is not even conjecturally easy to assign stationary residences. Towns, ramparts, buildings of any substantial kind, are by such men looked upon as lasting monuments of servitude. Does not the beast of the forest, said they, lose his native hardness and

ferocity when caged? Will a brave man look for safety in any thing but God and his own courage? The public assemblies of the Celts, we know, were annually, and at stated periods, held in open places; and they continued to be so held until the eighth century. And hence, the place of the spring meeting, where war was generally the subject of deliberation, was called, as it now is at Paris, *Le Champ de Mars*, or *Le Champ de Mai*. But, what we should really understand of this people, is, I conceive, that while some went to war, others staid at home for domestic defence, and for the tillage and cultivation of the lands. Cæsar confesses it was so with the Gauls; and Plutarch says as much of the Germans. Besides which, they had slaves, whom they employed in the cultivation of the ground, and who were denominated by the Romans *glebæ adscripti*. Moreover, Livy says, expressly, that during the reign of the elder Tarquin, when the Gauls first invaded Italy, Gaul abounded in all kinds of fruit and corn, and that its fertility and population were prodigious. Did not the same Gauls or Celts, and about the very period when the Phocians established themselves at Marseilles, build the city of Milan, and afterwards the cities of Come, Brescia, Verona, Bergama, Trent, and Vicenza.*

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The

* Justin.

The Celts, says Diodorus Siculus, are a brave and intrepid people. It was they who besieged and took Rome; who pillaged the Temple of Delphos, and who, settling themselves in Asia Minor, where they received the name of Gallo-Greeks, levied tributes from the greatest part of the powers of Europe and Asia. The riches supposed to be collected in Macedonia and Greece, from the plunder of Asia by Alexander, probably urged them to this enterprize. Their first expedition was about two hundred and eighty-one years before Christ. Their second was the year following, when Brennus is said to have commanded an army of 150,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 2000 chariots.* Suidas, indeed, makes the whole 300,000 fighting men, the greatest part of whom perished in the attempt. The third, was the subsequent year, when, laying Byzantium, Thrace, and the neighbourhood of the Euxine, under contribution, they passed over into Asia Minor, and established themselves in that country.† Livy further says, the Gauls entered Italy in force, two hundred years before they took Rome, or 589 years before Christ.

But, you may ask me, are all these people to be indiscriminately called Celts? I without hesitation

* Diodorus Siculus.

† Livy.

sitation answer, no; although, as we have already done with respect to the Scythiac, so we must suppose the Celtic dominion to have extended over other tribes, besides those properly called Celtic. Cæsar gives to each of his three divisions of Gaul a distinct language. But, might not these three distinct languages have been little else than three dialects of the one original? The Latin of the twelve tables, and that spoken in the days of Cicero, were so different, as to require a distinct study. The same difference existed between the ancient and the more modern Greek. What variations, therefore, might not have happened, from commixture of nations, in the widely extended dominion of the Celts? The Danes, the Swedes, the Germans, and the English, do not understand each other, though their several languages are derivations from the one Teutonic; neither do the Muscovites, the Poles, the Bohemians, and Dalmatians, though they are each a dialect of the Slavonian.*

It is certainly to be regretted, that the opinion should have gained ground, that the ancient Gauls and Germans, the Britons and Saxons, have been all one and the same people. It has

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been

* Pellontier.

been a great source of confusion and mistake, for it has confounded the antiquities of the Gothic with those of the Celtic nations. This crude opinion, which was first taken up by Cluverius, and maintained by him with uncommon erudition, was afterwards incautiously adopted by Keysler and Pellontier. So much learning and ingenuity have scarcely ever been more perversely and erroneously applied, or brought to adorn and support a more groundless hypothesis. According to these writers, two distinct races of men, the Celts and the Sarmatians, were the only ancient and original inhabitants of Europe; and from one or other of these, but chiefly from the former, all the ancient nations of Europe have descended. The Sarmatians, or Sauromati, it is said, were the ancestors of all the Sclavonian tribes; namely, the Poles, Russians, Bohemians, Walachians, &c. who continue to this day a distinct and separate people, extremely different in their character, manners, laws, and language, from the race of the Celts, from whom were uniformly descended the old inhabitants of Gaul, Germany, Scandinavia, Britain, and Spain, who were all included under the general name of Hyperboreans, Scythians, and Celts, being all originally of one race and nation, and having all the same language, religion, laws, customs, and manners.

Not

Not one of the well informed ancients, however, confounds the Scythæ with the Celts. Strabo's Celto-Scythæ, were those Scythæ who bordered on the Celts; as the Indo-Scythæ, were those who bordered on the Indi. We have already had it in proof before us, that the Scythæ, Getæ, and Gothæ, were but different names for one and the same people; as we call those Spaniards, whom the French call Espagnols; the Italians Spagnoli; or, as the French call the English, Anglois; the Italians, Inglesi. The name, however, of Goths is not near so old, as that of Scythians; the very first mention of it being in the time of the Emperor Decius, in the year of Christ two hundred and fifty.* After this, indeed, both names were used indiscriminately; and as it is observed, all the Greek writers, from that period, uniformly call those Scythæ, whom the Latin authors denominate Gothi.

Jornandes, who wrote about the year five hundred and thirty, gives Scandinavia for the ancient Scythia, and thence deduces the Goths. From Scandinavia he hurries them away to the Euxine; thence into Asia, &c. “Ex hac igitur Scandia insula, quasi officina gentium, aut certe velut vagina nationum, cum rege suo nomine

* Gibbon.

mine Berig Gothi quondam memorantur egres-
si :” whereas, the only colonies that can be traced
from Scandinavia, were, as we shall see presently,
the Picts into Scotland. * The Goths, there-
fore, or the Scythians, came from the present
Persia into Europe, by a north west progress ;
and consequently Scandinavia, instead of being
the country whence they sprang, may, with
greater probability be supposed to have been al-
most one of the last that received them. The
great Scythian empire must be resorted to as
the original nursery for the rest of the world ;
which extended from Egypt far beyond the Gan-
ges ; and from the Persian Gulph and Indian
Sea, far beyond the Caspian : which was in
splendour, says Epiphanius, when the tower
of Babel was raised ; and whose inhabitants, says
Eusebius, were the immediate descendants of
Noah ; from whose death, to the building of
the tower, Scythism prevailed. *Σκυθισμος απο
του κατακλυσμου αχρι του πύργου.*

The Celtic and Teutonic nations were radi-
cally distinct. At the same time it is to be ac-
knowledgeed, that in such very remote ages, ages
prior to history, it is not to be discovered, what
were accurately the limits of each people. Rov-
ing

* Pinkerton.

ing and unsettled, and often varying their situation ; being sometimes spread over a country, and at other times driven out of it, not even traces of language, etymologies, or even proper names, can always bear one out in the research. For instance, Cæsar informs us, that some of the Gallic tribes forced their way into Germany, and there established themselves. It is equally probable, that before his time, bands of Germans might, at different times, have penetrated into Gaul ; where, although their numbers might be too small to preserve them a distinct nation, yet these emigrants might impart many names of persons and places, that would out-live the remembrance of their founders. *

These two races of men, it may readily be believed, became, in process of time, in many things alike ; living in the same climate, and pressed upon by the same wants, they would necessarily be led to the same ideas, and to the same pursuits. But because the ancient Britons, in the time of Cæsar, painted their bodies, as do the present Cherokees of North America, is it to be contended, that the Cherokees are descended from the ancient Britons ? Not unnecessarily to mul-

* Dr. Percy.

multiply instances, however ; the difference in their religion and languages evince them to have been distinct and different people. The Goths had nothing that resembled that peculiar hierarchy, or sacred college, among the Celts, which had the entire conduct of all their religious and even civil affairs, and served them both for magistrates and priests, namely, that of the Druids. This difference appeared so striking to Cæsar, that he sets out with it, at his entrance on his description of the Germans, as a fundamental and primary distinction. “Germani multum ab hâc consuetudine differunt : nam neque Druides habent, qui rebus divinis præsent neque sacrificiis student.” The Teutonic nations undoubtedly had priests ; but they bore no more resemblance to the Druids than to the Pontiffs of the Greeks and Romans ; nor did they teach what the Druids taught, and the Celtic nations believed, the metempsychosis ; on the contrary, they had their elysium and hell. This Cæsar, also, positively asserts,

It possibly may be true, that the Gothic nations borrowed some opinions and practices from the Celts. Several observances might be caught up and imitated. But the difference of language is an argument of fact, which amounts, in

in questions of this nature, almost to demonstration. Tacitus assures us, that the ancient British language was very little different from that spoken in Gaul; “Sermo haud multum diversus.” But that the Gaulish language widely differed from that of the Germans, appears from the whole current of history. Cæsar, in particular says, “that Ariovistus, a German prince, only learnt to speak the Gallic language, by his long residence in Gaul. Moreover, compare the Welsh, Armoric, and Cornish languages, which are merely dialects of the old British or Celtic, with any of the Teutonic dialects of Europe, and see if they contain the most distant resemblance to each other. *

Diodorus Siculus, who was contemporary with Cæsar, and profited by his discoveries, speaks of the Germans as Scythians. Herodotus, it is well known, mentions the Germans as a Persian people. Ἄλλοι δὲ Πέρσαι εἰσι οἶδε, Πανθηλαίοι Δηρουσίοι ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟΙ. All the most authentic historians and poets, indeed, of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, agree, that their ancestors came, at different emigrations, from the more eastern countries. But it is not easy to decide, whatever our bias may be to Odin, or to others, by

* Dr. Percy.

by what route, and under whose conduct, they first came into Europe.

The ancient Germany is generally described as a raw uncultivated region, full of bogs and forests. “*Informis terris, aspera cœlo, tristis cultu, aspectuque.*” * The nature of the inhabitants is said to have been much the same. Yet among the German nations, we have at least some accounts, which are respectable, of the Cimbri and Teutones. The Cimbri had their residence in the great peninsula, which extended from the mouth of the Elve to the North Sea, and which from them was called Chersonesus Cimbrica. “*Promontorium Cimbrorum excurrens in maria longe peninsulam efficit.*” † The Teutones inhabited the neighbouring coasts and islands of the East Sea, or Baltic. We find that the Cimbri sent an embassy to Augustus; and Tacitus speaks of them as being a noted people in his days. “*Eundem Germaniæ sinum proximæ oceano Cimbri tenet, parva nunc civitas, sed gloria ingens.*”

The Germans, who were at all times formidable enemies to the Romans, taken collectively, were a prodigious nation. They inhabited almost

* Tacitus. † Pliny.

most the whole modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland. The tribes of this one great nation had one complexion, the same manners and language, and, in short, all that denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance.* “The Germans, says Cæsar, are great hunters. Their whole life is divided between hunting and fighting.” Tacitus adds, that whenever they were unoccupied by wars, they were occupied by the chase. Nor was this altogether an ignoble propensity. The first was agreeable to the universal sentiments of mankind: the latter, besides the preservation of health and strength, had the good of humanity in view. The earth was covered with ferocious monsters. All sorts of destructive animals ranged through the forests of Europe. The practice of hunting gradually destroyed them, and hence the reason why we have now so comparatively few of the wolf, the bison, the urus, &c. To Britain we are told, for even its dogs, were both the Celts and the Germans indebted. †

But in truth, what was there such a people as the Germans could not perform, whose number
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* Gibbon.

† Strabo.

of soldiers equalled that of their men, and whose temerity bid defiance even to death? As their wives and children followed them to the camp, an army might, whenever it pitched its tents, immediately form a new nation, and the prince, by whom it was commanded, establish a separate kingdom. The Germans, being inexhaustible, have within modern history, conquered all Europe. Hence, and from the histories of the new kingdoms that arose from them, we may form some idea of the yet more ancient migrations of the nations recorded in history and tradition.

It has been disputed whether the Cimbri, and their confederates the Teutones, who made the irruption into the Roman empire in the time of Marius, were a Celtic or a Gothic people. They who contend that they were Celts, may urge the resemblance of the name of Cimbri to that of Cymri, by which the Britons have always called themselves in their own language. They may also produce the authority of Appian, who expressly calls the Cimbri Celts, as well as of several of the Roman authors, who scruple not to name them Gauls. On the other hand, they who insist on their being Goths, have still stronger arguments in their favour. It is unnecessary

cessary to urge them in this place, as they are now pretty generally admitted. History informs us, however, of their having come from the remote parts of the north, and of their having in their progress overwhelmed the Gauls,* and that they were originally Scythian, from the extremest part of the Taurica Chersonesus.

The memory of their successes, in the first instance, as well as of their subsequent disasters, very rapidly passed away. Tacitus tells us, that in his time the Cimbri had nothing left but a celebrated name, and a reputation as ancient as it was extensive. But, as I have already said, the Celts had likewise their fame as soldiers, and in many periods of their history, were not inferior in renown to the Goths. Besides their own conquests, the Celtic arms are to be traced in almost all the great struggles of antiquity. Alexander reckoned them among the best soldiers of his army. Those in the service of Carthage, during the first Punic war, were the chief prop of the Carthaginian cause. Hannibal recruited his army with Gauls, and other Celtic tribes, and with them made Rome and the rest of Italy tremble.† The Romans themselves afterwards adopted the practice of entertaining Celtic troops,

VOL. IV.

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and

* Plutarch.

† Polybius.

and always found them of the most undaunted courage and resolution. *

Two circumstances, however, will unequivocally shew, the high degree of reputation in which the Celtic bravery was held. The first is, that the Roman republic, which on no occasion was forbearing, unless driven to it by necessity, for centuries continued to act upon the defensive, and never once ventured to attack those Celtic tribes, who were their nearest neighbours to the north. † The second was the law, which exempted the aged, and those employed in the service of religion, from bearing arms on any account whatever, except in cases of hostility with the Gauls. ‡ In such event, every citizen indiscriminately was to be enrolled. “And thus,” says Salust, “though the Roman arms have been successful in every other corner of the universe, they yet in every struggle with the Gauls have not only a contest for glory, but a contest for existence.” Polybius tells us, the Greeks had a dread and horror of the Gallic valour. Justin, in speaking of those who ravaged Greece, and afterwards passed into Asia Minor, says, “the terror they occasioned in every country was so great, that kings and nations sent them embassies and

* Putarch

† Cicero

‡ Appian

and presents to court their friendship and alliance. But what still, perhaps, adds more to their reputation, is the reliance the emperors of Rome implicitly had on their fidelity, as well as bravery. The body guards were generally Celtic. Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, would be served by no others.

It has been said that northern climates are naturally shaded high latitudes have a tendency to diminish the energy of the human mind. The assertion is curious. Many instances might be produced to prove it absolutely false. For example: the cold of Iceland is extreme, yet we know what genius is there given birth to. The Norwegians have in every age been remarkable for the vigour of their understandings. No penetration and vivacity can be more substantial and pure. So far from excessive cold being injurious to their intellects, it is remarked that the most one advances to the north in Norway, the more is brilliancy of understanding found to prevail. Drontheim, the city of Europe nearest to the Pole, and next to Archangel, the town the least remote from the frozen regions, is nevertheless remarkable for the intelligence of its inhabitants. The same

LETTER LXXII.

IT has been said that northern climates, especially those of high latitudes, have a tendency to depress the energy of the human mind. The assertion is erroneous. Many instances might be produced to prove it absolutely false. For example; the cold of Iceland is extreme, yet we know what genius it has given birth to. The Norwegians have in every age been remarkable for the vigour of their understandings. No penetration and vivacity can be more subtile and acute. So far from excessive cold being injurious to their intellects, it is remarked, that the more one advances to the north in Norway, the more is brilliancy of understanding found to prevail. Drontheim, the city of Europe nearest to the Pole, and, next to Archangel, the town the least remote from the frozen regions, is nevertheless remarkable for the intelligence of its inhabitants. The same
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may be said of the whole province, even where it immediately touches upon Lapland. *

So early as the ninth century, a colony of these Norwegians found their way into Iceland, and there settled themselves in tranquillity. Who has not read or heard of their Sagas, their ancient poetry and mythology? In the eleventh century, when almost every other European country was shrouded in ignorance, the Icelanders had enlightened writers. The historians of Iceland preceded those of Denmark and Sweden. The chronicle of Snorro Sturleson, who was born in Iceland, in 1178, is, above all, an inestimable work. But if, in this dreary, but monstrous mass of eternal fire and frost, Iceland, where, in a forlorn insulated state, nature seems to indulge in desolation and horror, men of extraordinary mental endowments could have been found, why are we to doubt that other northern kingdoms, even Siberia itself, might have had its brighter moments, its æra of refinement? The wild, rude, and uncultivated state of a country, is no proof that it was always in that state. Look, for instance, at the neighbourhood, even to the very gates, of the imperial city of Rome, and recollect the accounts

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which

* Mallet.

which are handed down to us of it ; where human nature has acted every part ; where every vice and every virtue has had its unlimited career ; where heroes have proudly flourished ; and where monsters have execrably satiated their wickedness. A Nero, and a Marcus Aurelius, have here trodden upon the same ground. Not a stone but speaks. Interrogate them, they will tell you each a disastrous tale. Yet, could the approach to Tadmor, in the desert, be more barren or more melancholy ? From Tuscany, through the whole of the patrimony of St. Peter, there is scarcely, if I remember right, a vestige of the tillage of man, except in a few almost obliterated furrows. Yet this is the spot whither the kings and nations of the earth heretofore hurried in crowds ; where Cæsar, Pompey, and Augustus rolled their innumerable myrmidons ; and now, save a few monks, and here and there a group of sickly beggars, where the human face is rarely to be seen.

Form, for a moment, the supposition, that an earthquake, or the undermining by subterraneous fires, should suddenly cause this famous city to tumble in, and to leave nothing but a lake, as is so frequently exemplified in Italy ; what would a traveller, uninformed of its former glory,

glory, say of so sterile and so barbarous a wild? The few mournful sepulchres, those mute but powerful pleaders of former population, would not speak more forcibly to his imagination, than they do to other unprejudiced minds, when they are found in other parts of the world. The tumuli, and the other repositories of the dead, which have been discovered in the plain and extensive deserts of the north, and in many of which, the bodies have been found wrapped in plates, and in cloths of gold, with bracelets, necklaces, vases, crowns, rings, sabres, &c. ornamented with emeralds, rubies, and variety of precious stones, address themselves as significantly to the understanding, as the tomb of the Scipios, or the mausoleum of Adrian.

An unphilosophical notion has also gone abroad, relative to the enervating quality of warm climates. The Greeks and the Romans speak much of Asiatic effeminacy, and give indolence as the distinguishing character of the inhabitants of those countries. Montesquieu, adopting the same opinion, and assuming the fact as a principle, has laid it down as an axiom, that the inhabitants of hot countries must necessarily be indolent, inert of body, and, from analogy, inert of mind and character. But were

the Assyrians, whose ambition, and wars during five hundred years, threw Asia into confusion ; the Medes, who shook off their yoke, and dispossessed them ; the Persians, who, under Cyrus, within the space of thirty years, extended their conquests from the Indus to the Mediterranean ; not to say any thing of modern days ; were these inert and indolent people ? May we not oppose to this system, also, the Phœnicians, who, for so many centuries, were in possession of the commerce of the whole ancient world ; the Palmyranians, of whose industry we possess such stupendous monuments ; the Parthians, those unconquerable rivals of Rome ; and even the Jews, who, limited to a little state, never ceased to struggle for a thousand years, against the most powerful empires ? If the men of these nations want activity, what is activity ? If they were active, where then is the influence of climate ? Does Carthage in Africa, and Hannibal, bear one and the same meaning, as indolence and inactivity ? The truth is, our sensations are relative to our habits ; and we assume a temperament analogous to the mental climate in which we live, and not to the atmospherical.

In the regions of the north, the ruins of extensive cities have been traced. Pyramids, and other

other pompous monuments have been discovered. Nor are we, because the sky is inclement, seriously to believe, that white bears and rein deer have been the sole inhabitants of the higher latitudes of Europe. To the north we modern nations of the globe are infinitely indebted. It is to that polar light, notwithstanding the difference of climate, of religion, and of particular accidents, we are to look up, in a great measure, for the illustration of our institutions, of our police, of our customs, of our manners, and of our laws. The most flourishing and celebrated European states owe, originally, to the northern nations, whatever liberty they now enjoy, either in their constitutions, or in the nature of their governments. The empire of honour, which characterizes mankind at present, we have derived from the north. The great prerogative of the north, in a word, and what ought to recommend its inhabitants beyond every people upon earth, is, that they have given birth or patronage to the liberty of Europe, that is, to almost all the liberty that is among men. The north of Europe has been called the forge of mankind. I should rather call it the forge of those instruments, which have broken the fetters of mankind, that were manufactured in the south. It was there those valiant nations were bred,
who

who left their native climate to destroy tyrants and slaves, and to teach men, that nature having made them equal, no reason could be assigned for their becoming dependent, but their mutual happiness.*

In fact, history has not recorded the annals of a people, who have occasioned greater, more sudden, or more numerous revolutions, than the nations of the north; even though we survey them, from the moment of their issuing, step by step, from the homes of their Scythian ancestors. When we consider the rapid conquests of these people, are we to give credit to the derogatory accounts given of them by their enemies; or to ascribe their success to force, and to brutal force alone? The science and genius of Zingis Cawn and Timour, children of the same soil, who in later days destroyed mighty empires, founded on arms and military discipline, are surely not to be doubted; and that they were not deficient in the arts of peace, is evident in their institutes. Can any reasonable man be persuaded then, that the lasting and flourishing governments which the northern nations established in various parts of Europe, could have been framed by the indiscriminating efforts

* Montesquieu.

efforts of ignorant savages? Or that such mighty atchievements could have been planned and executed without some extraordinary vigour of mind, some uniformity in their principles of conduct, and at least no common talents of political sagacity?

From what we have recorded in the page of undisputed history, we should learn to judge of what may have preceded the æras with which we are acquainted. The revolution which the Saracens, for instance, occasioned in Spain, is memorable. The Goths had come out of the north, and after many vicissitudes of fortune, had established a mighty kingdom, when another nation from the south approached to destroy it: just as when two storms arise in the air, the one disperses the other. The Goths had at length established good laws and polity in Spain, and the church flourished under the protection of their kings, when, on a sudden, the Saracens introduced a foreign religion, language, and manners. But, how is the imagination astonished at Timour, in his camp before Smyrna, meditating, and almost accomplishing, the invasion of the Chinese empire? From the Irtysh and the Volga to the Persian Gulf, and from the Ganges to Damascus and the Archipelago, Asia was in
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the hand of Timour. He aspired to conquer the Christian kingdoms of the west. He is said to have designed subduing Egypt and Africa; marching from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean; entering Europe by the Streights of Gibraltar; and after imposing his yoke on the kingdoms of Christendom, of returning home by the eastern deserts of Russia and Tartary.* Were Alexander's plans more mighty than these of Timour, or were his exploits more brilliant or successful? In short, did there ever exist an empire more extensive, or more populous, than the modern Scythian, in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries?

Of the northern nations our plan does not require us to take more than a general notice. Nor is it of any great moment to be particular as to their situations. About the time of Augustus, as relative to them, we can land on historic ground. At least as early as the Christian æra, and as late as the age of Antoninus, the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and seated in Prussia. If we could yield a firm assent to the voyages of Pytheas of Marseilles, we would also allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years

• Sherefeddin.

years before Christ. The Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one and the same people.*

Various writers, indeed, have confounded the different tribes of these nations, and have ranged all the most celebrated among them under the name of Gothi, even inclusive of the Visigothi and Ostrogothi, as if that name had been the common and national denomination of all those different tribes; whereas Vandali frequently occurs in Pliny and Tacitus, as a generic term. Certain, however, it is, that the common and national name of Vandali has been particularly appropriated to one certain people, whether consisting only of a single tribe, or of a confederacy and coalition of several tribes of the same nation. They it were, we are informed, who had a principal share in beginning the downfall, and afterwards in completing the destruction, of the Roman empire in the west. Many of them afterwards conquered, and finally settled in Africa.

The

• Pliny. Procopius.

The Hunns were a fierce and warlike nation, who inhabited that part of Asiatic Sarmatia which bordered on the Palus Mæotis and the Tanais, the ancient boundary between Europe and Asia.* They went under a variety of denominations, though in general they were comprised under the name of Ugri, changed afterwards into that of Hunni, or Unni. They were of the Scythian race; their government was feudatory; they left their abodes about the year of Christ 376, and after various fortune, at length settled in Pannonia, called afterwards from them, Hungary. Their first ravages were on the Ostrogoths.

Of the manners of the Gothic tribes we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter. They were eminently brave from education, and from the influence of a martial religion; and they were always to be dreaded, from the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, and from their consequent stability and union. Their hospitality, however, and kindness to strangers, even before they embraced the Christian religion, were remarkable; nay, their character in this respect obtained for them, we are told, the name of Goths; a name, according to Grotius,

* Am. Marcell.

Grotius, and most other writers, derived from the Teutonic word *goten*, signifying good. They encouraged, says Dio, the study of philosophy. Their laws were, also, little inferior to those of the Romans, as appears from the Alaric code; the laws of the Visigoths in Spain, and of the Ostrogoths in Italy. * Yet it cannot be denied, that though thus honourable, thus respectable at home, they still, abroad, were dreadful ravagers. As among the Greeks, even “robbing was honoured, provided it were done with gallantry, and from a stranger nation, and was a thing for which no one ought either to be scorned or upbraided.” †

The tyrants of the capitol are, from custom, treated with tenderness, while their brave and free conquerors are loaded with opprobrium. Let both have their due. What was the conduct of the first Cæsar among the Gauls? ‡ Or what shall we say to the savage mandate still extant of the emperor Gallienus, in the latter end of the third century, who, after the suppression of the rebellion of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple, in Illyricum, thus writes to his minister. § “It is not enough, that you ex-
terminate,

* Universal History.

† Thucydides.

‡ Cæsar.

§ Hist. August.

terminate such as have appeared in arms, the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated, provided, that in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die, who has dropt an expression, who has entertained a thought against me—against me, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes. Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: Tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings.” *

Were the annals, or even the traditionary tales of the Teutones, or Celts, ever stained with such cool, such premeditated atrocity? In the field, and according to the prevailing system of war, many horrors were undoubtedly committed by them against their enemies. But, the unbridled rage of contest at an end, the noble strain was never forgotten. “Bend the strong in arms, but, spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people; but, like the gale that moves the grass, to those who ask thine aid. Such a man stands great, and his battles are full of fame: but, the little soul is like

* Gibbon.

like a vapour that hovers round the marshy lake. It never rises on the great hill, lest the winds meet it there. Its dwelling is in the cave ; and it sends forth the darts of death."* And hence, says Gibbon, we may affirm with confidence, that the ravages of these denominated barbarians, whom Alaric had led from the banks of the Danube, were less destructive than the hostilities exercised even afterwards by the troops of Charles V. a Catholic prince, who stiled himself Emperor of the Romans. The authority of Alaric preserved order and moderation ; but, Bourbon dead, and every hour was marked by some dreadful act of cruelty, rapine, or lust.

The spectator who casts a mournful view over the ruins of ancient Rome, is tempted to accuse the memory of the Goths and Vandals, for the mischief which they had neither the leisure, power, nor inclination perhaps to perpetrate. The tempest of war might strike some lofty turrets to the ground ; but the destruction which undermined the foundation of those massy fabrics, proceeded slowly and silently, during a period of ten centuries. A monarchy, destitute of national union, and hereditary right, hastened to its dissolution.

VOL. IV.

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solution.

* Ossian.

solution. Yet, certain it is, that the capture of Rome by the Goths, that awful catastrophe, filled the astonished empire with grief and terror. In was an interesting contrast of greatness and ruin. The clergy, who applied to recent events, the lofty metaphors of Oriental prophecy, were sometimes tempted to confound the destruction of the capital, with the destruction of the world. *

In the year of Christ 250, the Emperor Decius was summoned to the banks of the Danube, by the invasion of the Goths. This was the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capitol, and reigned in Spain, Gaul, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in this subversion of the Western Empire, that the name of Goth is frequently, but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism. They marched to besiege Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of Mount Hæmus. Decius followed them, with all the exertions of the empire. The Goths turned; the camp of the Romans was surprized and pillaged; and, for the

* Gibbon.

the first time, a Roman Emperor fled. Philipopolis was taken. An hundred thousand persons are reported to have been inassacred. Many prisoners of consequence were taken; nor did Priscus, a brother of the late Emperor Philip, blush to assume the purple, under the protection of the Scythiac enemies of Rome.* Decius anew prepared to oppose the Gothic power. But, in the famous battle of Mæsia, A. D. 251, the Roman army was irrecoverably lost, nor could the body of the Emperor ever be found. This fatal blow humbled the Romans. The successor to Decius consented to leave in the hands of the Goths the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest rank. He even promised to pay them annually a large sum of money, on condition, they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions. The Goths returned home.†

This brilliant success of the Goths against the Romans has been attributed, in great measure, to the immense difference of manners in the conquerors and conquered. The former are said to have been in a state of growing civility,

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and

* Aurel. Victor.

† Zonaras.

and the latter to have been in a state of helpless corruption. The Goth was approaching to perfection, the Roman had been declining from it. They mutually despised one another, and were urged on in different directions. But if we look at the well disciplined troops of the Goths, their subordination, their fortitude, and their patience, we see the most powerful and the most probable causes of the mastery they gained over the plunderers of the world. The chief strength of Scythiac armies consisted of cavalry. The skilful management of a horse was, in consequence, one of the greatest accomplishments of a warrior. This characterized some of the Teutonic tribes, even in the days of Tacitus. “*Teneçteri, super solitum bellorum decus, equestris disciplinæ arte præcellunt. Nec major apud Cattos peditum laus, quam Teneçteris equitum. Sic instituere majores, posterì imitantur. Hi lusus infantium, hæc juvenum æmulatio, perseverant senes.*” Do we not also perceive this to be applicable, in a striking manner (and forgive me, I beg of you, the anticipation) to what was looked upon afterwards as the purest age of chivalry?

The practice of training horses to war was the peculiar talent of the Scythians, as far back as tradition

tradition gives us any traces of them. Horses are supposed to have been originally eastern animals. For instance, consult Homer, who copied the manners and customs of the ages of which he wrote, rather than of those in which he lived. He nowhere represents cavalry in the Trojan war. Horses had not been brought into Greece long before the siege of Troy. The method of riding, indeed, was so little known, that the Greeks looked upon the Centaurs, whom they supposed first to have mounted horses, as monsters compounded of man and horse. They had no other use for horses than to harness them to their chariots in battle. But more of this hereafter. The Goths acquired a decided superiority over the Romans; and no little skill, and combinations of knowledge, must be supposed to have led them to the accomplishment of it.

In contemplating societies considerably removed from our own times, we are apt to consider as accidental, what in modern states we should impute to wise institutions, and to the energies of an enlightened policy. But we should never fail to remember, that even in the experience of dark ages, the attachment of nations is wonderful to their ancient usages. We should always likewise

recollect, that if an individual in such times were to arise, of a capacity to frame schemes of legislation and government, he could not reduce them to execution. He could not mould the conceptions of states, to correspond to his own. It is from no pre-conceived plan, but from circumstances which exist in real life and affairs, that legislators and politicians acquire an ascendancy among men. It was the actual condition of their times, not projects suggested by philosophy and speculation, that directed the conduct of Lycurgus and Solon.

The historical progress of the Goths does not come within the compass of our design. I shall therefore dispatch that part of our subject as expeditiously as possible. In 408 Alaric, with his Hunns, Goths, or Scythians, invested Rome. The senate, reduced to the most dastardly apprehension, engaged to pay him a large sum of money, and to give him hostages for the fidelity of their engagements. The Emperor Honorius, however, regardless of the faith thus pledged in the Roman name, evaded fulfilling the articles of the stipulation. Alaric, in consequence, returned, and marching directly to Rome, the city opened her gates to him, and he caused Attalus, an Ionian, to be proclaimed Emperor.

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This was in 409. Two years afterwards, Alaric displaced Attalus, and restored Honorius, whom he again quarrelled with, and deposed. He then gave Rome to be plundered, for six days, to his soldiery. Most of the people were massacred, and the greatest part of the city was reduced to ashes. * This was the third sack of Rome by the Scythians. Thus eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of the imperial city, which had subdued so considerable a part of mankind, it fell before the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia. At the same time, however, it is not to be forgotten, that the proclamation of Alaric, on his entrance into the vanquished city, was strongly expressive of his regard for the laws of humanity and religion. †

In 441, Attila having succeeded his father, and having made peace with the Romans, conquered all the nations on the north side of the Euxine Sea, and made his son Ellac king over them. He demanded also all the Hunns, who had sheltered themselves in the Roman empire; but, upon being refused, he fell upon the eastern provinces, and put all to fire and sword, forcing the Emperor to retire from Constantinople into

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Asia.

* Universal History.

† Gibbon.

Asia. The next year, Theodosius was forced to conclude a second shameful peace with Attila, and to bribe him into better temper. Attila was sole master of all Scythia and Germany. * No prince ever subdued so many countries in so short a time; his authority being acknowledged by all the states and princes, from the Rhine to the most northern borders of the Persian empire. † When he entered Gaul in 451, he was attended by a troop of sovereigns, who stood trembling before him. They looked upon his decisions as oracles, and submitted to him as to the king of kings. ‡

Long before this, indeed, and when the Roman arms had not as yet declined from their pristine vigour, the country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Adriatic, and which was, subsequently, the peculiar residence of the Hunns, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the empire. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of its warlike inhabitants had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at

* Jornandes. † Priscus. ‡ Universal History.

at the head of the collected forces of the state. *
To make an end, however, of our enumeration;
in 458, the year in which Hengist, the Saxon,
overcame Vortigern in Britain, Theodoric, King of
the Visigoths, reduced the Suevi in Gallicia, and
entered Lusitania. In 461, Genseric ravaged
the coasts of Italy and Sicily. In 464, the Visi-
goths made themselves masters of a great part of
Spain; and in 468, totally defeated the Romans,
and drove them entirely out of that part of
Europe; and shortly after, made themselves mas-
ters of the far greater part of Gaul; this was in
the year 480.

* Velleius Paterculus.

LETTER LXXIII.

WE now recur to our former subject. The course of migration, among the nations of the ancient world, as far as it can be traced through antiquity, has been uniformly from the north and east, to the south and west. The polished nations of Europe, therefore, who now excel antiquity itself in arts, and vie with it in arms, owe their cultivation, and many of their best attainments, to the emphatically named Barbarians ; which word, by the way, has not been over accurately applied, as Barbaroi were shepherds. In Hebrew they were called Phut. In other languages they were called Berberi. From their places of habitation, the territory they occupied was called Barbaria by the Greeks and Romans. Berber signifies shepherd.* Notwithstanding this, and although almost all Europe is possessed by the immediate or the collateral descendants of the Goths, a people also to whom
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* Bruce.

the Greeks and Romans owed more than they were aware, or were willing to allow, yet such has been the blindness of Europe for centuries, that the name of Goth has been an admitted epithet of opprobrium. It is unaccountable, but it is still a fact, that instead of admiring a people, who could annihilate so potent an empire as that of the Roman, we learn from Roman writers, and their too partial expounders, that no people on earth could be equal to the Romans themselves.

All Europe, we are told, was in an absolute state of barbarity, until reclaimed and civilized by the Romans. We are certainly indebted to them for many of the ideas we at present possess; and without their example the strain of our literature, together with that of our manners and policy, would have been very different. This, however, it may not be arrogant to say, that although the modern literature partakes much of the Latin refinement, and both one and the other of the Greek original, yet our forefathers could not in either instance have drank of this fountain, unless they had in some manner or other opened springs of their own. The amusements of the tilt-yard, I am Goth enough to believe, were more beneficial to mankind,

kind, than the exercises in the Roman circus, or the Olympic barriers. The tendency, indeed, of all was the same ; to invigorate the faculties both of mind and body ; to give strength, grace, and dexterity to the limbs ; and to fire the mind with a generous emulation in the manly and martial exercises. Plato insists on the gymnastic exercises ; and without it, it appears, he could not have formed, or at least have supported, his republic. But were not the Gothic tilts and tournaments superior, both in use and elegance, to the Grecian games of Olympia ? The one did much less towards refining the manners, than the other. The Gothic gallantry had no ill influence on morals. The odd humour of Gothic days, was for the women to pride themselves in their chastity, and the men in their valour. High erected thoughts, seated in a heart of courtesy, was, according to an old writer, the proper character of such as had been trained in this discipline. The legends of ancient chivalry were as niches filled with statues, to invite young valours forth.* Together with a warlike spirit, the profession of chivalry impelled to every other virtue, the ornament of humanity. Affability, generosity, veracity, these were the qualifications most pretended to by

* Ben Jonson.

by the men of arms, in the days of pure and uncorrupted chivalry. Even in regard to letters, the first essays of wit and poetry, those harbingers of returning day, were made in the bosom of chivalry, and amidst the assemblies of noble dames and courteous knights. *

Of the early Gothic and Celtic story we have few remains. Among the Romans, on the contrary, historians arose, who transmitted with lustre their great actions to posterity. The actions of other nations are involved in fable, or lost in obscurity. The Gothic and Celtic nations afford a striking instance. The one trusted their fame to tradition and the songs of their bards; the other was so fettered by their Druids, that neither their religion, their laws, nor their history, were allowed to be committed to record; the preservation of the druidical supremacy depending upon the Druids always continuing the sole guardians and interpreters of all that related to morals, legislation, and government. Thus, says *Ælian*, “the ancient Thracians, as well as in general all the Barbarians established in Europe, look upon the use of letters as contemptible and disgraceful; though at the same time they are cultivated with success by the
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* Bishop Hurd.

the Barbarians established in Asia. Procopius also says, the Hunns held the same ideas ; that they had not the secret of letters, nor could they be prevailed upon to hold them in estimation : honour and religion, from the suggestions of the Druids, both forbade literary and scientific instruction.

Yet, something after all would have remained to us, had it not been for the gross bigotry of the first Christian missionaries : but, ignorance of letters was as sedulously inculcated among the first Christian, German, and Gaulish nobles, as it was among their Pagan ancestors. It was considered beneath a man of the sword, to be trammelled by the shackles of intellect. All knowledge was confined to the monasteries. And hence a convent became just the same thing as a Druidical temple. Wills, donations, exemptions, privileges ; in short, the disposition of all the good things of this world, as well as of the world to come, passed unavoidably through the agency of interest and superstition.

When I speak of Goths and Celts as being far advanced in a civilized state, I would not be understood as literally comparing them with the Europeans, for instance, of the present day.

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The cultivation they possessed, and which we shall have occasion pretty minutely to examine, was not such as could boast of its experimental philosophy, electricity, meteorology, but above all, its sublime practical part of astronomy and navigation. Even we ourselves can only boast of a successful issue, in the painful and laborious researches we have made, in the paths pointed out to us by the sages of Greece and Rome. Their disciples in silence we indisputably are, notwithstanding we have risen upon the foundation they laid for the western world in general. Nor need we blush to say, that what was only known or guessed at by the profoundest abilities among the ancients, is now within the certain and positive knowledge of nine tolerably instructed men out of ten. But, this was not the case with the Goths and Celts. Nor shall I trouble you with a wanton attempt to deduce physics from traditionary fiction; at the same time, bear always in recollection, that what has been handed down to us of the Goths and Celts, has come from their implacable enemies; and that though the picture is meant to be hideous, you yet cannot discern any more deformed trace than that which was equally applicable to the Romans, who destroyed by arms and treachery one half of the human race, to hold the other
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in subjection. Which of our hardy chiefs shall we reject, when Cæsar, who put to death or reduced to slavery *three millions* of the Gauls, is yet held up as the most generous and manly hearted general of the Romans?

An opinion has long prevailed among the learned of Europe, that arts and letters first took their rise in the northern parts of Asia, and that they were cultivated in those parts long before they were practised in Phœnicia and Egypt.* The practice of writing is of such remote antiquity, as I have already noticed, that neither sacred nor profane authors give any satisfactory account of its origin. It has been so long used that few men think upon the subject: it was almost always unanimously ascribed to the Gods: "And the ancients," says Warburton, "seldom gave any thing to those personages of whose original they had any record." When the memory of the invention, indeed, was lost, as of seed, corn, wine, writing, &c. then the Gods were permitted to seize upon the property, and to hold it by that kind of right which gives *strays* to the lord of the manor. Letters, however, were known in Phœnicia about a century and a half after the deluge recorded by Moses,

* Astle.

Moses, or 2180 years before Christ. Sixteen letters originally composed the alphabet.* But, it is not quite so clear, as we formerly proved, that all alphabets were derived from one, altho' most of those now in use may be derived from the Phœnicians.

Pomponius Mela asserts, "that the Phœnicians, among divers other arts, invented or devised letters, and making of books." These lines of Lucan have been frequently quoted:

Phœnices primi, famæ si creditur, ausi
Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris.†

"*O divinum scripturæ beneficium!*" exclaims Vossius; "*tu sola facis ut absentes non absimus; muti loquamur; mortui vivamus; cunctos seu dissitos, seu defunctos, sistis præsentis!*" After the flood of Noah, in the 1656th year of the world, there is certainly no intimation in the Holy Scripture of this stupendous and sublime effort of man, the use and application of letters, until the time of the children of Israel's sojourning in the wilderness of Sinai. Josephus, indeed, says, that Abraham, when he went to sojourn in Egypt, taught the Egyptians arithmetic

VOL. IV.

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* Gebelin.

† Phars. lib. 3.

and astronomy. Eupolemus, a more ancient Greek historian than Josephus, says also the same thing ; and further adds, that Abraham first instructed the Phœnicians in those sciences, and this even before he went into Egypt. Nay, St. Augustine does not hesitate in declaring it as his opinion, that letters were invented by Adam, his sons and grandsons, in the first ages of the world ; and that after the flood, they were preserved by Noah and his progeny, and afterwards passed to Abraham, and so on to Moses.

We have no beacons to guide us in this research, unless, as we have already done, we turn our heads to the East, as the Mahomedan does his face towards the tomb of his prophet. Time, which hath destroyed so many of the writings of antiquity, can be considered in no better light, than as an immense ocean, in which many noble spirits have been wholly swallowed up ; many greatly shattered and damaged ; some quite disjointed and torn in pieces, while others have been scarcely injured. Of the latter, however, the number is but small. *Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.* Yet, writing hath unquestionably caused, in the moral world, revolutions similar to those which navigation hath

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caused in the political. Preserving the ideas of all periods, it has transported those conceived upon the banks of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Tiber, to the recent known shores of a new continent. At the foot of the Cordelliers, in those countries governed by Incas, who imagined themselves descended from the sun, the philosophy, and the errors of ancient Greece, are now studied and freely debated. The obscure doctrines of the old Egyptians draw forth in the American, the subtlety of research; and the kindred soul of a Zoroaster is felt and understood, in the purifying spirit of his ethics, on the banks of the Ohio. Thus every mind, in some respects, becomes contemporary; and ages, stopped as it were in their progression, seem to be united.

Writing is the sole art, the main spring, by which improvement and knowledge can be circulated. This it is, which gives rapidity to the communication of thought, and to the diffusion of discoveries, in the wide range of nature and philosophy. Men occupied in literary pursuits, are to be conceived as a body perpetually assembled, who pursue without intermission the same labours. Every writer is a public orator, who addresses himself not only to his own
D d 2 country-

countrymen, but to all the world. If in this new species of popular assembly, he may be supposed to have lost the advantage of declamation and gesture to excite the passions, he yet is amply indemnified by having a more select audience, and being able to reason with more temperance ; and if the impression he makes be less lively, it is certainly more durable.* Moreover, by giving publicity to facts, it has rendered them more easy to be ascertained : and the monsters of fiction have ultimately dispersed, while under the review of sober and unbiassed investigation.

Man is naturally a poet. When we attend to the language, which savages employ on any solemn occasion, we shall find poetical inspiration from nature. We have planted the tree of peace, says a warrior ; we have buried the axe under its roots ; we will henceforth repose under its shade ; we will join to brighten the chain that binds our nations together. If you ask me how men came to be poets before they were aided by the learning of the scholar ? I may, in my turn, enquire how bodies fell by their weight before the laws of gravitation became recorded in books ? Mind, as well as
body,

* Volney.

body, has laws which are exemplified in the course of nature, and which we only collect, after example has shewn us what they are. And thus, occasioned probably by the physical connection between the emotions of a heated imagination and the impressions received from music and pathetic sounds, every tale among rude nations is repeated in verse, and is made to take the form of song.*

Poetical composition has been always antecedent to prose. The first authors have been always bards or rhapsodists; for among the species at large, as well as among individuals, imagination and sensibility, the true sources of poetical inspiration, precede the improvement and expansion of the reasoning faculty. No ear, but is sensible to the charms of harmony; no heart, but must vibrate at the heroic strain of gallant and generous actions; nor can the sympathetic throb be ever refused to the delightful emotions of pure and disinterested affection. Before the invention of letters, therefore, and consequently in the absence of written records, the ear is called to the aid of memory, and verse is ennobled as the sole vehicle of religion, learning, and history. Hence Memory was

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deified,

* Ferguson.

deified, and the Muses considered as her immediate offspring. *

The artless song, the heroic legend of the bard, indeed, has sometimes a magnificent beauty, which no change of language can improve, and no refinements of the critic can reform. Witness the most admired of all poets, who lived beyond the reach of history, almost of tradition. Achilles, as we are informed by him, sung to his lyre the praises of departed heroes; Amphion, to whose poetical and musical powers such amazing effects are ascribed, reigned in Thebes; Melampus obtained the royal dignity in Argos; and Chiron, the wise centaur, though entitled by birth to rank among the princes of Thessaly, preferred the cultivation of his poetical talents to ambition; and as is said, retiring to a cavern in Mount Pelim, conveyed instruction in verse to the celebrated leaders of the Trojan war.

The early poets, however, of whom any materials remain, were not natives of Greece; they were of Thrace, or of Asia Minor. Homer mentions Thamyras, the Thracian, contending in song with the Muses themselves in Peloponnesus.

* Hesiod.

nesus. Olen the Lycian, was the inventor of the Grecian hexameter verse; and his hymns, which were sung at the festival of Apollo at Delos, in the time of Herodotus, were the most ancient known to the Greeks. The hymns of Thamyris and Orpheus were admired for their singular sweetness, even in the days of Plato; and the Thracians, Thamyris, Orpheus, Musæus, Eumolpus, with Olen the Lycian, were the acknowledged fathers of Grecian poetry, and the first who attempted to reclaim the Greeks from barbarity, and to introduce that refinement of manners, taste, and language, which in subsequent ages distinguished a Greek from a Barbarian.* Olympus, the father of Grecian music, whose composition Plato † calls divine, was a Phrygian. Ionia was probably the birth place, and certainly the residence of Homer; Hesiod, and all the remaining masters of epic poetry, as they are generally stiled, were natives of the Asiatic coast. And it is no less remarkable, that the nine Lyric poets, except Pindar the Theban, and Stesichorus the Sicilian, were born in Lesser Asia, or the islands of the Ægean Sea. The most ancient prose writers too, Cadmus of Miletus, and Pherecydes of Cyros, boasted the same origin; and in a

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subsequent

• Aris. Ranz.

† Plato Minor.

subsequent age, Halicarnassus gave birth to Herodotus, the father of legitimate history. *

Thus we see that literature, taste, and science, originated in Asia, and by a gradual diffusion in the course of time, spread themselves over Greece and Italy. Besides the Hebrew and the Phœnician claim to the invention of letters, it has been contended also, that Fohi, first king of the Chinese, two thousand nine hundred and fifty years before Christ, had an undeniable pretension to that honour, having written in the Chinese language a book called Yexim. I do not presume to say a syllable upon such pretensions. It yet, however, is curious to remark, how very rude, we are taught to believe, the materials to have been, on which these very same literary characters were impressed. The most ancient materials, upon which writing has been transmitted to us, are hard substances, such as stones and metals, which were used for edicts and matters of public notoriety. The Decalogue was written upon two tables of stone; nor was this practice peculiar to the Jews, for it was used by most of the Eastern nations. Wood was also used in different countries. The laws of Solon were inscribed on
rollers

* Dr. Rutherford.

rollers of wood.* A treaty of commerce between the king of the Taurican Chersonesus and the Athenians, was engraven on three columns. The first was placed on the Piræus; the second, on the shores of the Thracian Bosphorus; and the third, on the shores of the Cimmerian Bosphorus; † serving for the commencement, the middle, and the end of the voyage the Athenian ships had to make to the Taurican dominions. The Areopagus had the ordinances of their authority engraven on a column: ‡ and the treaties of alliance between the different states of Greece were always carved upon columns.§

It is preposterous, however, to contend, that all writing was upon wood, and upon bricks and stones. These, indeed, might have been used for public monuments; and as the best substances for resisting the injuries of weather, and the accidents of time. Bricks and stones were, doubtless, used in ancient, as they are used in modern times. In every light we take it, we must suppose men in those days wrote as men in these days, and made use of every thing that was capable of receiving the impression of letters.

* Plutarch.

† Demosthenes.

‡ Lys in Erator.

§ Pausan.

letters. The Greeks and Romans, we know, used waxed tablet books, formed of wood cut into thin slices, and finely planed and polished; and this, long after the use of papyrus leaves and skin became common, because they were convenient for correcting extemporary compositions. The skins of beasts were also used, from the earliest ages. To the kings of Pergamus, I am aware, the invention of parchment is given. But, it is certain, they were not the inventors of parchment; they only found out a better way of making it, and brought it into more general use.

The Egyptian princes, having prohibited the exportation of the papyrus, Eumenes King of Pergamus, who reigned 263 years before Christ, ordered, that books should be made of parchment, which has in consequence been called pergamana. But, besides what is said of the books and the rolls of the Jews, Herodotus, many years before tells us, that *διφθερά*, or the skins of sheep and goats, were used for writing by the ancient Ionians. We are likewise informed, that the ancient Persians wrote their records on skins.* Mankind, in very rude and early ages, may undoubtedly have written on stones, bricks, tiles, marble, lead, copper, wood, bark,

* Diodorus Siculus.

bark, &c. “Gothos majorum,” says a later writer, “acta patrii sermonis carminibus vulgata, linguæ suæ literis, saxis ac rupibus insculpenda curasse.” * These, the most ancient nation made use of, because they were not acquainted with any thing more proper or convenient. Yet, in the oldest writings now extant, the Jewish Scriptures, we frequently read of books and volumes. Moses mentions the book of the covenant, the book of the law, and the book of the wars of the Lord. Job wishes that his adversary had written a book. Solomon says, of making of books there is no end. And lastly, several of the Prophets speak of rolls, and rolls of books. In regard to paper, indeed, such as we now use, Prideaux very consistently supposes it to have been brought from the East, where it certainly was known in the earliest ages. The Saracens first introduced it into Spain from the East, whence it was dispersed over the rest of Europe. Authors of eminence fix the introduction of it into Europe, in the thirteenth century. †

Next to authentic records, language is the best evidence of the extract of a people. A similarity in the language of different nations is,

* Saxo Gram.

† Astle.

of itself, sufficient to establish the certainty of their common origin. The modern Europeans, for instance, deriving their blood from three very different nations, still preserve among them the three original tongues of their remotest ancestors. These are the Gothic, the Celtic, and the Slavonic, all radically different one from the other. And hence, were all the historical monuments of the English and German, by some accident, to be lost, the identity of the radical words, common to the languages of both, would convince mankind, that one of those nations must have originally migrated from, or been afterwards enlightened by the other. At the same time, I am well aware of the excesses to which this species of analogy has been carried. Some have made the Hebrew the parent language, and have derived all from that source; others have insisted upon the Celtic. Some have contended for the Basque; others, for the Slavonian. The Celto-Scythiac has had various advocates; the Gothic, a no less formidable band. The spirit of derivation has gone so far, as even to deduce the Greek from the Hebrew; the Chinese, from the Gothic; the Hindoo, from the Celtic; the Latin, from the Slavonian; and the Egyptian, from the Scythian. But, however, hypotheses may be sported on this head, in what is called

called the Old World, what shall we say to the two or three hundred, radically distinct languages, which Condamine tells us, are in use in America?

Diodorus Siculus says, that the Greeks had letters before Cadmus; and that the Pelasgic, or real ancient Greek alphabet, differed from the Phœnician. Plato witnesses also, that the Scythæ had letters; he mentions them as Hyperborean letters, very different from the Greek. And yet we are told the Pelasgi were of Phœnician original, and were so called from their passing by sea, and wandering from one country to another. The Pelasgic alphabet, which prevailed in Greece before the age of Deucalion, one thousand five hundred and twenty-five years before the Christian æra, consisted of sixteen letters. In time, indeed, the number increased; but when, is uncertain. It is confidently asserted, however, that the new ones attributed to Palamedes, and Simonides, were in use before they lived; as we find some of them in that most ancient inscription, found at Amyclea in Laconia, which is supposed to have been written about one hundred and sixty years before the siege of Troy, or one thousand three hundred and forty-four before Christ.*

“The

“The testimonies are innumerable,” says Dr. Parsons, “that argue for the universality and antiquity of the Pelasgians, not only in Greece, but in every country round them, as well islands, as on the continent; and we have the testimony of Berosius, that they were distinguished for a lettered people. The Pelasgians and the Scythians were the same. Did not Homer write in the Pelasgian character, in which he was instructed by his master Pronapides? Inachus, first fabulous king of the Pelasgians, is by some mythologists said to have come into Greece by sea. But did not this idea arise solely from the similarity of the word Πελαγος the sea, and Πελαργος a Pelasgian; though the latter word may be probably derived from Πελαγιζω, overwhelm, because the Pelasgi over-ran so many countries; or more probably from some Assyrian, Egyptian, or Phœnician epithet, given to the old inhabitants, if it be not a Scythiac appellation? * Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo, indeed, assert the Pelasgi to have come from Thessaly into Greece. Ancient Pelasgia included Macedon, Epirus, and afterwards that part, in still later times, called Hellas, or Greece. And thus, might not the Thracians who filled this Chersonesus, be called Pelasgi by their northern brethren, being every

* Pinkerton.

every where surrounded by the sea, excepting on the north ?

With these Pelasgi, however, we are not to confound the Greeks, who afterwards, under the same designation, passed into Italy, and settled in Grecia Major. * Homer, as I have just said, is supposed to have written his poems in Pelasgian characters. † The words made use of to express the numerals by the Greeks, and their manner of marking, by initial letters, came also from that ancient people. And it is farther curious, that the names of numbers in the Pelasgian, Teutonic, the Persian, the Greek, the most ancient dialect of the Latin, the Sanskreet, and even the Irish, are the same words, and with less variation than could have been expected in dialects spoken by nations living in countries so remote one from the other, and which must have come from the parent stock, at times so different. ‡ Even the alphabet, at present in use among most nations in Europe, is to be traced to a Scythiac origin. The old Greek, the old Latin, and even our present capitals, are all very nearly the same. In the fables, in which the commencement of their history is enveloped, it is

VOL. IV.

not

* Dion. Halic.

† Diodorus Siculus.

‡ Salmasius.

not difficult to trace the origin of their first characters in writing; the country where they derived their form; and those who were looked upon as their undoubted proprietors. Diodorus Siculus informs us, the Muses received letters originally from Jupiter; that they inhabited Mount Parnassus; that they were the companions of Apollo and Bacchus; that they exercised the functions of priestesses, known under the names of Pythias, and Sybils; and that they followed the Pelasgians in their journies.* Parnassus, by the way, you will recollect, was a mountain in Bactriana, though afterwards the name was given to that hill on which Delphos was built; as was a common custom, indeed, among the ancients: thus in regard to a town, which Helenus in Virgil built in Epirus:

— Parvam Trojam, simulataque magnis
Pergama.

That Greece was inhabited in very ancient times by a race of people, who were enlightened from the east, and particularly from Asia, is a fact that cannot be controverted.† The Pelasgi, if not the first inhabitants, were at least the first who introduced civilization and arts into Greece;

* D' Hankerville.

† Monboddo.

Greece; and established rule, and the forms of good government. No less an authority than Homer vouches this. He reckons the Pelasgians among the Trojan auxiliaries; and it is to be observed, he dignifies the Pelasgi with an epithet, which he bestows upon no other nation, though he frequently bestows it upon individuals: he calls them *διοι Πελασγοι*.^{*} The reason, as his commentator Eustathius explains it, is, because they were the only people who, after Deucalion's flood, had preserved the use of letters. "Now, as these letters came from the east," says Lord Monboddo, "there is all the reason in the world to believe, their language was some dialect of the Gothic, Celtic, or whatever other language was spoken in the western parts of Asia, or eastern parts of Europe. The ancient Greek and Pelasgi were the same language; and though the vanity of the generality of the Greeks made their language, as well as themselves, the growth of their own country, yet, the more learned and wise were above so vulgar a prejudice.

Words which denote the relation of consanguinity among men, such as *father, mother, brother*, must have been among the first words in every language. Now it appears, that these names

VOL. IV.

E e

are

* Iliad. Odyss.

are the same, in four at least of the languages I have mentioned, the Teutonic, Persian, Greek, and Latin: for as to the Greek names, *πατερ*, and *μητηρ*, or *mater*, as it is in the Latin, we know from our own dialect of the Teutonic, they are the same in that language, and the Persian *puddur* and *madur* are evidently the same. And the Latin word *frater*, or *φρατερ*, the old word in Greek, whence a word still in use, *φρατρια*, is clearly the same with the German *bryder*, the Persian *broder*, and our *brother*. More of this, however, hereafter. Homer learnt from the Scythians or Pelasgi; and by him has not all the western world been taught? His work, as a wild paradise, is like a copious nursery, which contains the seeds and first productions, out of which, those who followed have had only to select and arrange such as suited their purpose. Throughout every part of the heathen world, his works were read and adored. They passed for unequalled poetry; grew into a system of history and geography; rose to be a magazine of science; and were exalted into a scheme of religion. From these the poets drew their inspiration; the critics their rules, and the philosophers a defence of their opinions. Warriors formed themselves by his heroes; and the oracles delivered his verses as the responses of the Gods. Homer had, also, a
knowledge

knowledge of the planetary system. He knew the use of the stars, for he makes Ulysses sail by the observation of them. He even gives them the names they are yet known by, as the *Hyades*, *Pleiades*, the *Bear* and *Orion*. Of the five zones, he evidently speaks in his description of the shield of Achilles.* Of natural philosophy, there are many principles scattered up and down his work. But these branches of learning do not lie much in the way of an heroic poet. Notwithstanding, though poetry was his business, to which every thing else was to be subservient, he yet has not failed to introduce those strokes of knowledge, from the whole circle of arts and sciences, which the subject demanded, either for necessity or ornament.†

From premises such as these, it clearly is to be inferred, that a Scythian or Pelasgian people instructed the Greeks. The universality, indeed, of their language subsequently rendered some of the Greeks hardy in pretension. Nor among the vanities of the world, is it to be wondered at. Before the Christian æra, Greek was spoken by Jews, Romans, and Africans, as well as by the neighbouring Asiatics whom they had converted. It was the language of the learned and

E e 2

polite

• Eratosthenes.

† Pope:

polite in Syria and Egypt, as well as in Italy and Carthage. It must have been understood by all ranks of men in Judea, since the inspired writers employed it in propagating the gospel, which was to be first preached to the Jews. It was even spoken in modern Europe, so late as the middle of the fifteenth century, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks; and when, after a reign of two thousand four hundred years as a living tongue, that is, from the time of Homer, it fell under the superior pressure of a branch of its own older family.

From the Greek, it is generally agreed by the most respectable authors both ancient and modern, the Latin letters were derived. Pliny, *de literis antiquis*, says, “Veteris Græcas fuisse easdem pené quæ nunc sunt Latinæ.” And Tacitus asserts, “et forma literas Latinis, quæ veterrimis Græcorum.” They are likewise supposed to have originally consisted of but sixteen.* Quintilian, indeed, says, “the number, form, and power of the Roman letters were not the same in his time as they were in former ages; he remarks, in particular, the letters were originally fewer in number. “Illa vetustissima transeo tempora, quibus et pauciores eræ, nec similes
his

* Astle,

his nostris earum formæ fuerunt, et vis quoque diversa." The primitives of the Latin tongue, we are also told, do not differ materially from the language of a branch of the Celts, to whom neither the literature nor the government of Rome ever extended themselves. "The Scots of Caledonia," says Macpherson, "were never subdued by the Romans; and they had little connection with that illustrious people. The Roman language cannot be supposed to have penetrated where neither the literature, nor the arms of Rome ever entered; yet, there is a wonderful similarity, if not a *perfect identity*, between many primitives of the Gaëlic, and others that correspond to them in the Latin tongue. And to remove every supposition, that the Scots of either of the British isles borrowed any part of their language from the Latin, every word in the Gaëlic is either a compound or derivation, from acknowledged primitives in the same language.* Pezron, indeed, had before declared his opinion, that the Greek, Roman, and Celtic languages, had one common origin; and our great antiquary, Lhuyd, had coincided with him.

Doctor Malcolm, however, in a publication many years previous to either, says, "I have en-

E e 3

quired

* Macpherson.

quired into the sources, and traced up the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Greek, and Latin languages, and find they may receive a great deal of illustration from the ancient languages of Britain, more especially, the ancient Scotch or Irish." Nor does a late learned writer * in reality disagree with him. He only contends, that the form and structure of the Celtic tongue are remote from the Greek; the Celts changing the beginning of nouns in many inflexions, while the Greeks uniformly change the end. What we now call the Celtic, indeed, says he, is half Gothic, owing to the Belgæ, Danes, and Norwegians being mixed with all the Celtæ of France and Britain; but, especially in the Highlands of Scotland, where the Celtic is the most corrupt, because the Norwegians were possessors of the Hebrides and western coasts, from the reign of Harold Harfagre, about 880, till so late as 1263.

* Pinkerton,

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

COURT DE GEBELIN gives a list of about eight hundred words radically the same in the Greek and in the Celtic languages; and the latter he terms Pelasgic. The old Celtic, indeed, seems to have been the most generally spread language of Europe, and to have continued so, until through length of time and place, and intermixture with the Scythians and other nations, it split into a great variety of dialects, which still however retain the filial marks of their original parent. The Celtic does not appear to differ much from the Scythiac, says a very able writer; the Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldaic, Greek, Latin, &c. one would be apt to conclude to be merely dialects of the same tongue.*

As we shall hereafter find, there is a strong resemblance among the several Gothic dialects, so I think it will be equally evident, that they are radically dissimilar to those of Celtic origin. Had these two languages ever had any preten-

E e 4

sions

* Universal History.

sions to be considered as congenial, the further we traced them back the stronger would be the resemblance between them; but the most ancient exemplars appear as utterly dissimilar as the most modern. Here and there, indeed, a word may have been accidentally caught up on either side, or perhaps adopted by each of them, from some third language, radically different from them both. In short, if they must be admitted, though I am far from subscribing to the doctrine, to be streams from one common fountain, it must be allowed, that one or both of them have been greatly polluted in their course, and received large inlets from some other channels.

The Cambrian, or ancient British languages, for instance, namely, the Welsh, Armoric, and Cornish, I can readily believe to have been Celtic; and I can conceive the same of the very early Irish. But, beyond this I do not feel myself warranted to go. Even the ancient name Gael, Galic, which has made such a noise, and which has so eagerly been contended for, does not seem to have been used by the natives of Gaul themselves, but to have been given them by foreigners: they called themselves Celtæ, and their language Celtic; in like manner as the inhabitants

habitants of Wales, though called Welch by us, term themselves Cymru, and their own language Cymraeg; while they at the same time call the English Saissons, and their tongue Saissonaeg, thus reminding them of their Saxon origin.* And this I mention thus early, as it will be necessary, that you bear it constantly and strongly in your recollection.

The ancient Gaulish letters are derived from the Greek, and their writing approaches more nearly to the Gothic than to the Roman.† These ancient Gaulish characters were generally used by that people, before the conquest of Gaul by Cæsar; but after that period the Roman letters were gradually introduced. This formation of the Gaulish letters appears in the monumental inscription of Gordian, messenger of the Gauls, who suffered martyrdom in the third century, with all his family. The Helvetians had letters, and of the Greek form, as mentioned by Cæsar, who found their records: *Græcis literis utuntur*. Nor is it wonderful it should be so, although there was no very direct way for their introduction into Helvetia; for the Greeks who established themselves at Marseilles, during the infancy almost of the Roman

* Dr. Peircey.

† Astle.

Roman republic, and who had commercial connections as far as Helvetia, would naturally have brought with them their letters, and probably the disposition to instruct their factors, agents, and men of business.

Some writers are of opinion that the Greek characters were used in Britain, previous to its invasion, but that they were changed at the Roman conquest; for the Romans were always careful to obtrude their language upon those they overcame, as a certain sign of dominion, and as the means of a more positive union. The British and Irish, says Lhuyd, had letters long. The Britons, indeed, used the Latin characters, before they embraced Christianity. In Juvenal we read, *Gallia cauidicos docuit facunda Britannos*; and in Tacitus, *Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire & ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre*. And this selection by Agricola of the British princes to be instructed in the liberal arts, finding them perhaps more desirous of Roman instruction than the Gauls, was in the beginning of the second century. The Celtic inhabitants of Spain had letters, as we learn from Strabo. *Hi (Turdetani) omnium Hispanorum doctissimi judicantur, utanturque. Grammatica, & antiquitatis monu-*
menta

menta habent conscripta, ac poëmata, & metris inclusas leges, a sex millibus, ut aiunt, annorum. Utuntur & reliqui Hispani grammatica, non unius omnes generis ; quippe ne eodem quidem sermone.

It is contended, indeed, by some moderns, as if better acquainted with these things than the old living witnesses, that the Britons were not possessed of letters before their intercourse with the Romans ; for, say they, after the most diligent enquiry, no one *manuscript* has ever been found written in such characters. Cunoboline, king of Britain, who lived in the reigns of the emperors Tiberius and Caligula, erected different mints in Britain, and coined money in gold, copper, and silver, and inscribed it with Roman characters. It is even said, that although from the coming of Julius Cæsar, till the time the Romans left the island in the year 427, the Roman letters were as familiar to the eyes of the inhabitants as their language to their ears, yet that writing was very little practised by the Britons till after the coming of St. Augustine, about the year 596.*

But, is this a fair way of stating the question ? When Cæsar arrived among the Helvetii,

* Astle.

vetii, he found that nation had the Grecian alphabet in current use among them. Do the same Helvetii now employ that character, or have they not substituted the Roman in its stead? When the Helvetii, therefore, who by Cæsar himself are acknowledged to have had letters, and yet now have no manuscript to boast of, can have so changed their manner of writing, why may not the same latitude be given to the Britons? The present existence of one character, is no certain proof that a prior character did not exist. Can it be said, because the Helvetii have not now ancient Grecian manuscripts to produce, that before they were invaded they had no documents at all? Cæsar himself asserts that they had: and is not the argument equally good for the Britons as for the Helvetii? Moreover, what interpretation is to be put upon these expressions in the Commentaries? “It is thought the institutions of the Druids came originally from Britain into Gaul; and at this time they who are ambitious of becoming eminent in the Druidical rites, repair to Britain for their education. They are enjoined to commit to memory a great number of verses, as it is deemed unlawful to trust their mysteries to *writing*. On other occasions, public or private, they use the Greek character. The first points

of their theology, are, the immortality of the soul, and the metempsychosis, or passage of the soul from one body to another. This they think a great incentive to virtue, by inspiring a contempt of death. Many other things they instruct their disciples in, as of the stars, and their motions; of the world, and the earth's magnitude; of the nature of things, and the immortality and power of the Gods?''*

This clear and comprehensive account, from the pen of so able and so discriminating a writer as Cæsar, supersedes, in my opinion, every adventurous criticism, which national pyrrhonists have of late thrown upon the early knowledge of the Celts. No hypothesis can overset the fact, that the Helvetii and the Gauls had letters. And yet the Druids, the only learned of the community, were, as a finish to their education, obliged to pass over from Gaul into Britain. Were they instructed to pick up knowledge from the illiterate and ignorant? Moreover, is there no such old Celtic word as oga, ogum, and ogma, which properly signifies secret letters, writings in cypher, or, in another sense, occult science? †

Agreeably

* Lib. 6.

† Keysler Antiq. Septent.

Agreeably to Newton, about the fourteenth century before the Christian æra, when the Canaanites, who fled from Joshua and retired into Egypt, had been expelled that country by Amosis, and settled in Phœnicia, we are to date the general introduction of letters into the western parts of Asia. From Phœnicia they proceeded to the Syrians, Ionians, and Medes, and were probably, says Newton, those letters mentioned by Pliny under the name of eternal letters, being the foundation of the Phœnician, Samaritan, Ionian, and Chaldaic alphabets. In the beginning of the eleventh century before Christ, the Phœnicians and Syrians flying under the conduct of Cadmus, and other captains, from David, introduced letters into Greece, and the adjacent countries. About three hundred years after Cadmus had thus introduced letters, the Medes revolting from the Assyrians, numbers were obliged to seek an asylum in the southern and midland parts of Europe, where they were known for several ages by the name of Sarmatæ, or Sar-madæ, that is, descendants of the Medes. These people, who had obtained the use of letters about four hundred years before their settlement in Europe, probably introduced them among the Celtic and Scythiac tribes of the middle regions, where, after undergoing some alterations

rations by the several clans, they laid the foundation of the Runic alphabet, and the several species of letters used by the Goths and Saxons, before their conversion to the Christian faith, as mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus, and others. In the mean time, the Cadmean letters being somewhat altered by the Pelasgians and other Aborigines of the country, were, by the Ionians and Phocians, on their establishment of the colonies of Etruria and Massilia, about the forty-fifth Olympiad, introduced into Italy, and the southern parts of Gaul, thereby laying the foundations of the Etruscan, Massilian, and Rhætic alphabets; for which reason, Cæsar and Tacitus observe, the Gauls and Rhætæ of their times had letters resembling the Greeks. Another branch settled in the northern parts of Africa among the Lybians, where, in process of time, an alphabet was formed, somewhat different from any of the others. The characters belonging to this alphabet are still preserved in inscriptions found in Sicily. The Phœnicians, on their establishment at Carthage, mixed their letters with the Lybians, whence the Punic alphabets were in several instances different from the ancient Phœnician, and nearly the same as the Massilian, which had obtained several Lybian letters from their commerce with those people. On the conquest

conquest of Spain by the Carthaginians, the compound Punic was introduced into that country.

Cæsar, who though the conqueror, is yet in the present instance, the defender of the rights of Britons, says, that on the coast of Britain there were colonies from the neighbouring continent, still distinguished by the names of the countries whence they had come; that these colonies, being possessed of agriculture, and having good stock of cattle, were extremely populous; that they had money made of iron and brass, the first of which metals, with great quantities of tin, were found in their own island, the other metal was imported from abroad; that the inland parts were occupied by the original natives, who were curious in the ornaments of their persons, affected to have bushy whiskers, and long hair, and they stained or painted their bodies. A description, by the way, the latter part of which, little more than two hundred years ago, was accurately verified in London from a neighbouring island. When O'Neal, says the historian, who claimed the sovereignty of Ulster, waited upon Elizabeth in London, he was attended by a magnificent train of Irish followers. He appeared with a guard of *galloglasses*, arrayed in the richest habiliments of their country,

country, armed with the battle-axe, their heads bare, their hair flowing on their shoulders, their linen vests dyed with saffron, with long and open sleeves, and surcharged with their short military harness: a spectacle to a people, who imagined they beheld the inhabitants of some distant quarter of the globe. *

Fable is evermore suspected, when prejudice cannot overcome evidence. But, even in regard to fable, or rather to traditionary story, let it not be forgotten, that were the absence of fable in history, made the criterion of its validity, we should explode the ancient history of almost every nation upon earth. I am not contending, that the inhabitants of the Britannic Isles borrowed their arts, sciences, and letters from the Pelasgians for instance, or from any other Orientals directly. But, who can doubt that the correspondence the ancient Britons had for so many ages with the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, must have given a few, at least of the inquisitive, a knowledge of the manners and customs, and a smattering, if not more, of the erudition of those enlightened foreigners? This commerce, in fact, could not have supported itself for so long a space of time, had not the Phœnicians had considerable establishments in these islands. More-

over, what in reality were the difficulties, which, after the reduction of Spain by the Carthaginians, could have prevented the merchants of Carthage, even established in that country, from disseminating a moderate portion of their compound Punic, among a people such as the Britons, who were confessedly neither wild, nor barbarous.

But, we are told, the Phœnicians carried on their commerce with the Britons, with the greatest secrecy, insomuch, that a Phœnician vessel, if pursued by a Roman, chose to run upon a shoal, and suffer shipwreck, rather than discover the coast, tract, or path, by which another nation might come in for a share of so beneficial a commerce : and therefore it is to be presumed, that their policy prevented them from instructing the ancient inhabitants of Britain in the use of letters. This is a very round about sort of supposition ; especially, as in addition to, or rather as a repetition of what I have already quoted, we are informed by Strabo, that the Gauls and Britons wrote their letters, contracts, accompts, and whatever related to public business and civil life, in Greek characters. The Phœnicians, we all know, were a celebrated commercial people ; that they arrived at considerable

ble perfection in the art of navigation; that they made long voyages; and that their trade with the British islands, or *Κασσιτεριδες*, so called from the Greek name of Tin, was, after some hundred years continuance, at length put an end to by the decadence of the power which first gave it birth. We are also informed, that Britain lay commercially idle for one hundred and seventy years previous to Cæsar's arrival.

The discovery of Britain, that is, by a distant people, according to ancient historians, was made by the Phœnicians long before the first of the Olympic Games, the first of which, agreeably to the Julian account, was one thousand four hundred fifty-three years before Christ. Strabo says, the Phœnicians were the first of all distant people who traded to the Cassiterides.* Pliny writes, that lead was first brought into Greece out of those islands. And although they were not yet known to the Grecians, Herodotus the Pelasgian, makes mention of them, saying, "I know not the islands of Cassiterides, whence we derive our tin." The fact is, the tin was purchased by the Greeks from the Phœnicians. But the whole goes, at least, to prove the truth of what is asserted by Pliny, that Britain was

F f 2

famous

* Sammes.

famous in the Greek monuments, long before Rome arrived at its distinction.

Learning and Science are in the speediest manner communicated by commercial intercourse. And as in former days, the Phœnicians exceeded all other people in this respect, so might their voyages have been more universally beneficial. The general names of places, as well as of most things of great concern, were certainly given by the Phœnicians, altho' the vanity of the Greeks led them to new model them, and to give them as their own. Thus Europa, was Ur-appa, which signifies white complexions; Asia, was Asi, or the country in the middle; and Africa, was Aphrica, or the land of corn.* Barat-anac, from the abundance of tin, is even said to have been the Phœnician name for Britain. Notwithstanding all this, however, I do not mean to avail myself, even as far as I might, with apparent probability, of a Phœnician hypothesis; at the same time I must be allowed to conclude, if what Cæsar says be true, of the Britons being more learned than the Gauls, that such superiority could proceed from no other cause than their intercourse with the Phœnicians, in the progress of their commercial undertakings.

Before

* Sammes.

Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes, of whom the most considerable were, the Belgæ in the west, the Brigantes in the north, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk.* But, these various tribes, says a celebrated writer,† possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. Thus, neither the fortitude of Caractacus, the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the Imperial Generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest and most vicious of mankind. In Domitian's time, the collected force of the Caledonians being defeated at the foot of the Grampian Hills by Agricola, the conquest of Britain was considered as atchieved; and it was designed by Agricola to complete and ensure his success, by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries would be sufficient.‡

Four kings were found in Kent, on the first arrival of the Romans. But, we find in like manner, from Homer, that ancient Greece was

F 3

divided

* Whitaker.

† Gibbon.

‡ Tacitus.

divided into a great number of petty dynasties. The same kind of government likewise prevailed of old in Gaul, Italy, Spain, and Germany, and does even at this day in various countries of the east. Mela says, Britain abounds in nations and kings of nations; and this probably ironically: yet it is confessed that Britain cost the Romans a war of forty years before it was finally reduced. Julius, we know, began it; and therefore Gibbon departs from his usual accuracy when he calls it a war, undertaken by the most stupid, maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors.* But, let us turn our attention to Cæsar. He had assembled on the Gaulish side, now supposed to be the Wissan, between Calais and Boulogne, † eighty transports, &c. Here he embarked. He found, on getting to the English shores, the hills covered with numerous bodies of foot, of men on horseback, and even in wheel carriages, from which the natives of this country were accustomed to make war. He debarked, it is supposed, on some part of the flat shore which surrounds the Downs; *planum et apertum littus*. The place of landing the succeeding year, is supposed to have been Pigwell Bay, at the entrance to Sandwich haven.

I will

* Claudius. Nero. Domitian.

† D'Anville.

I will not trespass upon you with an enquiry into the particulars of this war, but I must intreat you to observe a very singular circumstance in the account given us by Cæsar : the British manner of fighting in *chariots*, a custom similar to those of ancient usage in Greece and the neighbouring countries, but never brought into use by the Romans ; a custom which is to be traced, even as far back as I have already mentioned, in the records of Indostan, among its earliest laws. * That the Britons went in chariots of war, is universally known. *Britanni dimicant non equitatu modò, aut pedite, verum et bigis et curribus.* † The common land carriage in Britain was performed even as at present, by the means of carts and waggons, and that too for length of time before the Romans had introduced the elegant conveniencies of life with their government. ‡ That the Britons used carriages for the convenience of travelling, is also equally certain, from the testimony of Diodorus Siculus. Some of those vehicles were even more expensive than the most brilliant equipages of modern times ; for the chariots in which the kings fought, were frequently of solid silver. *Nil tam conspicuum in triumpho, quàm Rex ipse Bituitus,*

F f 4

disoloribus

* Gentoo Code.

† Pomp. Mila.

‡ Diod. Sicul.

*disoloribus armis, argenteoque carpento, qualis pugnaverat. **

Now, if any one thing can be more clear than another, it is that carts, waggon, and sumptuous carriages, together with the roads consequently necessary, cannot be supposed among a people, without conceding to them, at the same time, some slender acquaintance with refinement. Moreover, if we turn our eyes from the land to the sea, we shall find that as a naval power, the Britons were far from being contemptible in Cæsar's time. As a principal reason for invading Britain, Cæsar himself accused the Britons of having assisted the Gauls, both with ships and armies. *Vincula dare oceano, & Britannos subjugare*, were convertible terms. Before the days of the elder Pliny, the northern nations not only ventured up the tempestuous seas of Norway, but even passed over into Thulé, which the learned suppose to be the same with the modern Iceland. These voyages could not have been performed in open boats, nor in hulls of wicker, covered with raw hides. Tacitus says, the Suiones, or ancient Scandinavians, had fleets. *Suionum civitates, in ipso oceano, classibus valent.* The Saxon auxiliaries of Vortigern

* Florus.

tigern transported themselves from Germany into Britain, in vessels so large that three held them all. But, indeed, it is a known fact, that the British ships, even in the earliest days, were built of oak, so strong, that they were impenetrable to the beaks of the Roman gallies; and so high, that they could not be annoyed by the darts of the Roman soldiers.

The Aborigines of both Gaul and Britain were Celtic. Yet both Gaul and Britain long quarrelled about supremacy. Gaul boasted of having colonized Britain, and she was probably right. Britain boasted of having colonized Gaul, and she was probably wrong. The contest, however, was puerile and immaterial. It ascertained, indeed, one point, and that ought to have satisfied them, that they were one and the same people: though it cannot be disputed, that many colonies from northern parts of Europe were successively afterwards planted in Britain, as well as in Gaul. Thus the Gaël, Cimbri, and Belgæ, differed very little from each other, either in language or manner. They exhibited a distinct race from the Celtæ and Cymri; and consequently declared so unequivocally a dissimilitude, that it is only astonishing, a circumstance should
4 have

have been lost sight of, which carried with it such irresistible force.

Cæsar, speaking of Gallia Belgica, or that part of the main land nearest to Britain, says, “Ple-rosque Belgas esse ortos à Germanis, Rhenumque antiquitus transductos, propter loci fertilitatem ibi consedis- se, Gallosque qui ea loca incoherent, expulisse.” These words plainly suppose, that Gallia was inhabited by Celts before the Belgæ came into it, who expelled them. These Gauls, therefore, thus expelled, retreated into Britain; and there, likewise, it is certain, these Belgic Scythians found their way also. Now, at what period this was, I cannot pretend to say. I might, indeed, guess; and the chances are, I should be as near the truth as Richard of Cirencester, who fixes the peopling of Britain about one thousand years before Christ. “A. M. 3000, circa hæc tempora cultam et habitatam primum Britannicum arbitrantur nonnulli:” and this was, as you will recollect, about the reigns of David and Solomon among the Jews.

Here, indeed, is one instance, and one species of colonization on the part of the Gauls. But, the Britons are not without instances on their parts

parts also. About the close of the fourth century of Christ, Maximus, the Roman usurper in Britain, boldly resolved to prevent the designs of Gratian. The youth of the island crowded to his standard, and he invaded Gaul with a fleet and army, which were long afterwards remembered, as the emigration of a considerable part of the British nation. The whole body consisted of thirty thousand soldiers, and one hundred thousand plebeians, who settled in Bretagne.* Llywarchen, a famous Welch bard, who lived only one hundred and fifty years afterwards, and many of whose poems are still extant, celebrates this expedition, and sings of the warriors who were decked with golden chains.† But you will ask me, how came Wales to be so populous in those early days? I reply, because the Britons, (not Belgæ, recollect) were driven to take shelter in that strong and mountainous country. There their enemies could not readily pursue them. Cambria itself, at one time, formed six kingdoms, each of which was governed by its own king, and so continued till the year 843, when Roderic the Great became sole monarch.‡

Although this very powerful emigration took place from Britain into Gaul, it was not these
first

* Usher.

† Warton.

‡ Universal History.

first emigrants who fixed the name of Britanni on the continent. It was there ages before. Dionysius the geographer, and Pliny the naturalist, both speak of the Britanni as the name of a tribe on the borders of Picardy and Flanders. Armorica and Britannia were in fact equally the appellations of the country, long before the refugees of Britain could have settled in it. * The Arboryches were the nations who inhabited the shores of the ocean from Aquitaine to Boulogne. The word Ar-mor-Rich, in the Gaulish language, signifies a maritime country. † The name of Armorica, however, seems, from the shifting application of it by ancient authors, and from the full import of the word, to have once extended along the whole compass of the Gallic coast, from the Bay of Biscay to the Rhine.

Shall we, with this general acceptance then, subscribe unconditionally to the Gallic pretension, and say, Britons were enlightened, if not derived from Armoricans? Or, *vice versa*, shall we give our suffrage to our own countrymen? It matters not. The point, as I have above said, is immaterial: take which side you will, as it respects colonization. The immediate, or the collateral resemblance, however, is beyond every possibility of

* Whitaker.

† L'Abbe Dubos.

of doubt. And nothing could prove it more clearly, than that the Welsh and Cornish, whose language was another dialect of the ancient British, should, from the fourth and fifth centuries, have maintained an intimate correspondence with the nations of Armorica: intermarrying with them, and perpetually resorting to them for troops against the Saxons, for the purposes of traffic, and on every other important occasion. And this intercourse will appear still more natural, if we consider that Armorica was never much frequented by the Romans; and that the inhabitants of Cornwall and Wales, intermixing in a very slight degree with the Romans, and having suffered fewer alterations in their original constitutions and customs, than any others, long preserved their genuine manners and British character. Even Cornwall retained its old Celtic dialect till a very late period. * “In Wales and in Armorica,” says Gibbon, “the Celtic tongue, the native idiom of the west, was preserved and propagated; and the bards, who had been the companions of the Druids, were still protected, in the sixteenth century, by the laws of Elizabeth.” †

* Cam. Brit.

† Decline and Fall Rom. Emp.

LETTER LXXV.

THE periods of the Scythiac and Celtic histories, which ought to have been best illustrated, are unfortunately those which have been most neglected. It is, indeed, a mortifying reflection, that we should think the history of our own ancestors of no moment, in comparison with that of the Romans, who conquered and pillaged the whole world. The materials are certainly not very great. There are, however, some lucid traces. And it is a fact we ought all to feel, that the smallest even of our own kingdoms was superior in size and power to any of the heroic kingdoms of Greece, whose history we read with so much attention; and that the whole Grecian story, till the period of Alexander, was not in itself more important or more interesting than that of the heptarchy of England.

Mankind, when in their rude state, have a great uniformity of manners; but, when civilized,

lized, they are engaged in a variety of pursuits ; they tread on a larger field, and separate to a greater distance. Every nation is a motley assemblage of different characters, and contains, under whatever political form, some examples of that variety, which the humours, tempers, and apprehensions of men, so differently employed, are likely to furnish. Every profession has its point of honour, and its system of manners ; the trader his punctuality and fair dealing ; the statesman his capacity and address ; the man of society his good breeding and wit. Every station has a carriage, a dress, a ceremonial, by which it is distinguished, and by which it suppresses the national character under that of the rank, or the individual : and this description may be applied equally to Athens and to Rome, to London and to Paris, to Bishops and to Druids. *

The performers of all sacrifices ; the performers of all religious rites ; and the expounders of all sacred and moral laws among the Celts, were the Druids.† They also, as I have already said, instructed youth in all sorts of learning, such as philosophy, astronomy, astrology, the immortality and transmigration of the soul. And this
their

* Ferguson.

† De Bello. Gall.

their philosophy, at least in the opinion of Aristotle, was supposed to have passed from them into Greece, and not from Greece to them. Pythagoras in particular is declared, but I should think erroneously, to have taken his metempsychosis from the Druids.* In their researches on the soul, the Druids departed from the opinion of the ancient Brachmans, who supposed that the soul of man was a portion of the irresistible principle which pervades and moves the immense body of the universe. The ideas of the Druids concerning God, was certainly the same with those of the eastern philosophers. But they placed in the human frame a distinct intelligence, capable of happiness, and subject to misery. The immortality of the soul was the first principle of their faith, and the great hinge upon which the religion of the ancient British, as well as of all other branches of the Celtic stock, originally turned. †

With their speculative opinions, the Druids inculcated upon their followers, some general maxims of social conduct. The result of their inquiries in other branches of philosophy, however, their discoveries in the nature and properties of matter, they confined to a few ; to astonish

* Clem. Alex.

† Macpherson.

tonish into veneration for their order, a race of men whom they wished to govern through the channel of prejudice and error. Darkness was favourable to the continuance of their power. Hesiod and Homer, with most of the ancient authors, pass the highest eulogiums on the Druidical learning ; and even go so far, in consequence, as to call the Britannic isles the Barbarian Paradise. The Celts themselves, according to Plutarch and Procopius, placed their paradise in Britain and the neighbouring islands : and hence we need not be surprised at the extraordinary sanctity and veneration, in which the Druids of these islands were held ; neither are we to discredit what Pliny says, that the science of divination, and the philosophy of the Magi, were exercised in Britain with such admiration, and with such unusual ceremonies, that the Persians themselves might have learned instruction from the schools of the Britons.*

Besides the higher studies, the Druids were also skilful naturalists. They were well acquainted with the use of simples ; and almost exclusively exercised the profession of the healing art. They are, indeed, supposed, as I have said, to have taught the transmigration of souls ;

VOL. IV.

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and

* Hist. Nat. 30, l.

and that it was in consequence of this doctrine, they roused the Celts to that sovereign contempt of death, which they always manifested. But this supposition is not altogether well founded. The Druids certainly taught, for they certainly believed in, a future state, in which the brave and good would be rewarded, and in which the wicked would be punished. And this doctrine they held, ages previous to the appearance of Pythagoras, or the spreading of the doctrine of the metempsychosis. *

The conjectural derivations of the word Druid have involved it in considerable obscurity. The Germans believe they found it in the German word *Dru*, or faithful; the Saxons, in the word *Dry*, or magian; as the Persians in the word *Daru*, or wisdom. The Armoricans, in their word *Déruidhon*; the Milesians of Ireland, in their word *Dair*, or oak, with which Ireland formerly abounded; and whence it was called *insula nemorosa*. Nor is this in any respect different from the Greek derivation *δρυς*, an oak; nor inconsistent with what might naturally be expected from the sacred groves in which the Druids celebrated their mysteries. The most ancient, and the most celebrated oracle of

* Pellontier.

of Greece, was consulted under the oaks of the forest of Dodona. Even the Israelites held the oak in great veneration. *

Yet it has been doubted whether Druidism was ever established in Ireland. No historical evidence, it is said, proves the fact; and the probability is on the other side, as the last firm opposition of the Druids was in Anglesea: for had they possessed Druidical friends and brethren in Ireland, would they not have retired to that kingdom, where they might have defied the whole Roman power, rather than have continued in a circumscribed and an unsheltered spot? But this mode of reasoning is more ingenious than solid. The religion of the ancient Irish, till near the middle of the fifth century, was Druidical; and traditional testimonies, and presumptive arguments, are not wanting, to convince us, that Cæsar's account of the Druidism of Gaul is equally applicable both to Ireland and to Britain; the religion even of many of the Germans was nearly the same as Druidical, although, as remarked by an able writer, † Pinkerton asserts, that those who speak of Druids in Germany, Caledonia, or Ireland, speak palpable nonsense, and have not a single authority to

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support

* Ezekiel, cap. vi.

† Dr. Campbell.

support them." If Stonehenge be a Druidical remain, Ireland possesses similar remains in abundance, though of inferior dimensions. Giraldus says, "Fuit antiquis temporibus in Hibernia lapidum congeries admiranda, quæ & chorea gigantum dicta fuit."

These open temples, it is very true, seem to have had their origin in Scythia. No such monuments are to be found in the Lesser Asia; nor in the country where Carthage stood; nor in Egypt, or Palestine about Tyre, the original seat of the Phœnicians; but numbers are discovered in Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and the Asiatic Tartary: a convincing proof, that these remnants of former times are not the works either of the Phœnicians or Carthaginians.* On the contrary, while the religion of the Druids was preserved in all its purity in Britain, it became contaminated in Spain by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, as it did in Gaul by the Greeks and Romans.

But the last place in which we find the Druids in the history of the British dominions, is certainly Ireland, where they continued in full possession

* Dr. Campbell.

session of all their ancient power till the year 432 after Christ, when St. Patrick undertook the conversion of that island,* Long after the order of the Druids was extinct, indeed, and the national religion altered, the bards continued to flourish, not a set of strolling songsters, like the Greek *Aoidoi*, or rhapsodists, in Homer's time, but as an order of men highly respected in the state, and supported by public establishment. We find such, according to the testimonies of Strabo and Diodorus, before the age of Augustus Cæsar; and we find them again under the same name, and exercising the same functions in Ireland, and in the north of Scotland, almost down to our own times. †

Of this, however, more hereafter. The Druids were divided into different classes (all subordinate to a chief or sovereign pontiff, stiled the Arch-druid) and called by the Romans Bardi, Eubages, Vates, Semnothei, Sarronides, and Samothei. They were held in the highest veneration by the people. Their life was austere and recluse from the world. Their dress was peculiar and imposing. It was flowing; and when employed in religious ceremonies, they always wore a white surplice. They gene-

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rally

* Borlase

† Blair.

rally carried a wand in their hands, and wore a kind of ornament enchased in gold about their necks, called the Druid's egg. Their necks were likewise decorated with gold chains, and their hands and arms with bracelets : they wore their hair short, and their beards remarkably long. The chief power was lodged in their hands ; they punished as they pleased ; and could declare war and peace at their option. Not only was their power extended over private families, but they could depose magistrates, and even kings.

In such profound veneration were the Druids held, and particularly their *papa* or chief, who was elected by the higher orders of Druids in conclave, that conceiving themselves filled with the spirit of God, they arrogated a power over the past, the present, and the future. They fulminated in the name of the divinity ; and their voice was to be obeyed, as the voice of heaven. Their sovereign pontiff had his forehead bound with a diadem. After the king, he was the first person in the state. The clergy had precedence of the nobility. They paid no taxes, nor would they allow themselves to be liable to assessment. Their wives partook of their honours, and in many instances, even were allowed to participate in the

the sacred offices of the priesthood, not unfrequently they were looked upon as superior to their husbands. “The Germans,” says Tacitus, “believe women have something divine in them, and that they are inspired by heaven. “They regard them,” says Plutarch, “as prophetesses, as sacred women, ἱερὰι γυναῖκες.

The wisdom, the sanctity, and the sedulously inculcated predilection for the order of the Druids, occasioned them to be consulted on every matter of private or public importance. They were looked up to as the interpreters of both God and man. “They decide all differences,” says Cæsar; “they judge of crimes, of murders, as well as of successions to property, and the boundaries of lands. They determine all penalties, and recompence. And if any man murmurs, he is excluded from the sacrifices, which, of all punishments, is the most dreadful that can be inflicted.”* This *excommunication*, which not only excluded from all religious rites, but from all assemblies whatever, declared a man also infamous, and ordained him to be abandoned. The whole world shunned him. Even his wife and child were forbidden to succour him, or to administer to his relief.

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How

* Cæsar. Tacitus. Capit.

How came it, that this ugly feature of the days of Paganism should have been transferred, through holy pretension, and the zeal of proselytism, and in an equal, if not a more ample measure of devout atrocity, to the pontiffs of the Christian faith? Charlemagne, indeed, was led to renew the law of Constantine the Great, which forbad judges in civil matters to take any sort of cognizance of such causes as ought, in his opinion, to be carried before the tribunal of the bishops. But did Charlemagne give priests permission to light up an *auto de fe*, as the Druids did a wicker idol, for the bloody immolation of human victims?

In the immolations of the Druids it was fancied, (and barbarous ignorance is sometimes as much to be pitied as condemned) that the intentions of the Divinity were to be discovered. When they were about to attack an enemy, they had often the practice of taking a solemn vow, to exterminate all of the race of man, together with all other living creatures, that should fall into their hands. At least we are told this, and the sanguinary determination makes us shudder. "Nor was it until the reign of Adrian," says Eusebius, "that the Romans were able to eradicate

eradicate this bloody superstition from among the Gauls." "The ferocity of the Gauls," says Diodorus Siculus, "shews itself most in their religion." Nothing can be more impious than the offerings they make to the Divinity, and nothing more detestable than the manner in which they offer them. Plutarch further asks, if atheism be not preferable to the bloody superstition of the Gauls? Human victims were every where offered by the Celts. Nor let the accusation be alone confined to the Celts. The Sarmatæ, or Slavonians, so late even as the twelfth century, immolated all the Christians that fell to them in captivity.* The Tyrians, the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Arabians, the people of Carthage, those of Athens and Lacedæmon, the Greeks of all the islands, the Romans, and in short almost every nation upon earth, offered up, at periods indeed different, but with equal barbarity, the sacrifice of their fellow creatures. Nay, even in domestic life it was an obligation imposed upon many of them, but particularly the Celts, and that too on the grounds of religion and morality, to rid of a burthensome life the aged and the infirm. Yet what shall we say of the celebrated and renowned Phœnicians? Among the Celts, the children

* Helmold. Chro. Slav.

children, mistaken in their charity, deprived their parents of their existence ; among the Phœnicians, the parents mistaken in their duty, deprived their children of their existence.*

The intrepidity of the Celts, (and here I make no difference between Celts, Goths, and Celto-Scythians) is conceived to have arisen from their belief in a future state ; and every account seems to confirm this. Their heroic poems, their hymns, in chaunting of which they gave battle to their enemies ; these all not only inspired them with courage, as they recited the former exploits of their ancestors, but as they instilled into them the belief, that he who should die with arms in his hands was certain to pass into a life infinitely more happy than the present ; where his lot would far exceed in delight that of him, who should die through accident, disease, or old age. Death they at all times preferred to captivity. When no longer capable of defending themselves, the murder of their wives and children was certain, and afterwards the deliberate destruction of themselves. The wounded on a retreat, at all times, implored to be put to death. The great Brennus, in his unfortunate enterprise against Greece, exhorted

* Pellontier.

horted his shattered forces, first to burn their baggage and waggons, and next to slay each other. They faithfully executed the command. Twenty thousand perished by mutual slaughter: Brennus himself, among the rest. Nor were women less firm and resolved in defence of their liberty. The wives of the Teutones, after their defeat by Marius, demanded three conditions of the conqueror: not to be reduced to slavery; that their persons should not be violated; that they should be employed in attendance on the vestal virgins. Marius refused the conditions; and the consequence was, the next morning all the women and their offspring were found dead.* The wives of the Cimbri exhibited, the year following, a still more tragical instance of a thorough contempt of life, when in any manner apprehended to be stained by dishonour or bondage. But I will not dwell upon the instances which I readily could even multiply; nor, in collateral evidence, will I refer you to what has happened even in modern times in the East. The Indo-Scythians have too often, and too literally, trod in the proud and destructive path of their ancestors.

With

• Plutarch,

With this elevated mind, however, Diodorus Siculus reports of the Celtæ, that though warlike they were upright in their dealings, and far removed from deceit and duplicity. * Cæsar says, “Galli homines aperti minimeque insidiosi, qui per virtutem, non per dolum, dimicare consueverunt.” And though cruel to their enemies, yet Pomponius Mela observes, they were kind and compassionate to the suppliant and unfortunate. † Strabo describes the Gauls as studious of war, and of great alacrity in fighting, otherwise an innocent people, altogether void of malignity. ‡ I have already mentioned to you the aversion to study, which was instilled into the minds of the higher orders of the laity. The man who was trained to any civil occupation except religion, was dishonoured not only in himself but in his posterity. Herodotus says, the Scythians, the Persians, the Lydians, and in a word, the greatest part of barbarous nations, regard as a vile populace those who are bred to business. Those who do not exercise any profession are looked upon as noble. The Greeks, and particularly the Lacedæmonians, borrowed from the Barbarians these lofty principles. The Corinthians held in sovereign

* Lib. 5.

† Lib. 3.

‡ Lib. 4.

vereign contempt a trader or a mechanic. We read even in Procopius, that the great men among the Goths represented to the learned Amalasunthe, the mother and guardian of Athalaric their king, and the spot of whose treacherous fall you had lately occasion to visit, at Bolsena, that study was injurious to valour.

In almost an equal proportion to their disgust to solid acquisition, they manifested an attachment to those exercises, by which their passions might easily be inflamed. Music was in high estimation throughout the western world. They had harps, lyres, flutes, trumpets, and other instruments. The bards were both poets and musicians ; but, whether these were the growth of their own soil, is a point not so easily to be determined. The Greeks, we know, derived their music from the Scythians. I have already given you the names of the poets and musicians who were their instructors. The Greek instruments even retained their Scythiac names. Thus, as the Greeks, a neighbouring nation to the Pelasgians, were indisputably enlightened by that branch of the Scythians ; so might the Celts, by those branches of the Scythians who were spread around them. The Scythians and the Celts, as relative to each other, did not stand immovable

able like two huge forests, lowering at each other ; or if they did, chance surely must have disseminated some of those seeds, which required but little culture to bring forward.

To a more distant source, however, we are instructed to look. The Ammonites are said to invite our attention. Some of that family, says a late mythologist,* were the first who passed the Alps. This passage was the work of Hercules. Not only Alpine appellations, in many instances, but even Alpine rites, were Ammonian. Among the evidences, what can be stronger than the worship of Isis, and of her *sacred ship*, which prevailed among the Suevi. “Pars Suevorum et Isidi sacrificat : unde causa et origo peregrino sacro, parum comperi ; nisi quod signum ipsum in modum Liburnæ figuratum docet advectam religionem.”† Moreover, the name of the mountain Pyrene signified a fountain of fire, and that the mountain had once flamed : and among the Alpes Tridentini, according to Seneca and Pliny, there was a Pyrene. Now these Ammonites were of a mixed race, being both of Egyptian and Ethiopic original ; Αἰγυπτίων καὶ Αἰθιοπῶν ἀποικοι. The custom

* Bryant.

† Tacitus.

custom of carrying the Deity in a shrine placed in a boat, was in use among both people. Besides, all the Ammonian families affected to be stiled Heliadæ, or offspring of the sun: and under this title they alluded to their great ancestor, the father of all: as by Osiris, they generally meant Ham. $\Sigma\omega\nu$, is the fountain of the day. The land of Zoan was the name of Heliopolis; and the city of Zoan was the place of the sun.*

Ingenious as these conjectures may be, they do not accurately square with historical evidence. We shall on a future occasion, however, have something to say on a probable hypothesis, which in parts, indeed, may not be found dissimilar to this. For the present, therefore, I have only to repeat to you, that the Celts of the continent, the British, the Erse, or Highlanders of Scotland, the Hibernians, the Manchs of the Isle of Man, together with the inhabitants of the Western Islands of Scotland, were radically, in my opinion, one and the same people. They were originally of the same stock, soil, or origin. And their ancient language, I must believe to have been the same. All writers agree, that Britain and Ireland, (not to say any thing of the
junction

* Heathen Mythology.

junction of the island) at least were peopled by the same race of men. Lhuyd, the best informed antiquary of Britain, and the best judge of the matter, because a master of the old Irish, as well as of the old British, confesses, that the most ancient names of places, rivers, and mountains in Britain, are pure Irish; that both the Welsh and Cornish are replete with Irish, nay that they are nearly of the same genus; and that part of their compounds are undeniably Irish. Tacitus declares their customs and manners, in his days, to have been similar.

The first inhabitants of Britain and Ireland, say certain respectable authors, were a colony of Magogian Scythians, mixed with Phœnicians and Egyptians, who first fixed themselves in the Greek islands, under the name of Pelasgi. These Magogian Scythians settled very early in Palestine at Bethsean, thence named by the Greeks Scythopolis. This city, in the time of Joshua, was in the possession of the Canaanites or Phœnicians: * consequently, in the time of Joshua, Canaanites and Scythians were synonymous names. The Gomorites were the ancestors of the Welsh: their migration into Europe is not related as planting colonies, but, as a war-like

* Chap. 16.

like expedition, as an invasion and irruption. They subdued, and drove the former inhabitants out of their possessions; or, where there was room enough, incorporated with them; and, as is always usual with conquerors, compelled them to observe their laws and customs. This was the case of Britain, and the neighbouring continent.

“To me,” says Vallancey, “it is most probable, that the Celtæ were the primitive inhabitants of Spain, France, the Britannic islands,” &c. The Scythi acknowledge, they found all those places inhabited on their arrival. The Irish have tradition, have history to produce, of this emigration from Asia, to their final settlement in Ireland; and the language of their ancient documents, so very different from the Celtic, is so *conformable to the Oriental*, that it is a strong collateral proof of their history. In vain, then, have the Scotch and Irish endeavoured to boast of their antiquity over each other; both, were in possession of the Britannic isles, at the same time. One inhabiting the eastern island, called it Albanich; the other inhabiting the western island, properly named it Iarnach or Eireneach.

I shall not take upon me to decide, to which of the Britannic islands the following description of the Hyperborean island is to be applied. It comes from Hecateus of Abdera, a very ancient writer, and is handed down to us by Diodorus Siculus. “It is a large island, little less than Sicily, lying opposite the Celtæ, and inhabited by the Hyperboreans. The country is fruitful and pleasant, and dedicated to Apollo. They have a language peculiar to themselves. From this famous island came Abarius to Greece, who was highly honoured by the Delians. They can shew the moon, *very near them*, and have discovered in it large mountains.” This account of Hecateus is confirmed by Pindar, who calls the inhabitants of the Hyperborean island Δᾶμον Ὑπερβορεῶν Ἀπολλωνῆος Θέραποντα, the servants of the Delphic God. And Callimachus calls them Ἱερὸν Γένος, a sacred nation. Herodotus too, who is called the father and prince of historians, tells us, that on account of their humanity and goodness, they were looked upon as sacred by all their neighbours. A great mistake has, however, arisen from the name given by Hecateus to this island, it being supposed to imply a northern people. Hence, some moderns have placed it under the Arctic Pole. But, the analysis of the word proves, that Hecateus meant by it, a

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country

country peculiarly blessed by nature, 'Υπερ'Βορέων, beyond, or out of the reach of the northern blasts, that is, a temperate island. Thus Orpheus called it 'Ιέγυς, or the holy island; and Homer, the Ogygia, or most ancient island. *

In France, there are at this hour the remains of three ancient languages of Gaul. The Bas-Breton, which is the ancient Celtic; the Cantabrian, which is spoken by the Bearnois and the people of Navarre, at the foot of the Pyrenees, and which has given them the name of Basques and Biscayans; and the French, properly so called. † Joseph Scaliger says, indeed, there were only four ancient languages in all Europe, and that from them were derived all the other dialects. Admitting all this, what does it prove? Nothing more, I conceive, than this, that to no one people, nor to any one tongue, are we implicitly and exclusively to confine ourselves. How absurdly would it sound now, were it asserted, that the Americans, when first visited by the modern Goths of Europe, spoke but one language from the one extremity of the continent to the other! or that the great king-

H h 2 dom

* O'Halloran's Hist. Irel.

† Mariana de Reb. Hispan.

dom of the Hindoos, when first explored by Europeans, should, instead of Malabar, Telingana, Mahrattah, Nagri, and Sanskreet dialects, have been made known to us, as possessing one, and one only, general Hindostannic language!

The Biscayans, however, who are in Scaliger's enumeration, are looked upon, in fact, as the remains of the first inhabitants of Spain; the successive allies and enemies of the Carthaginians and Romans. Their language is, consequently, held to be of the highest antiquity, older than the Greek and Latin, and to have no resemblance to the Celtic, the Gothic, or to any other language, ancient or modern.* *Their* dominion formerly extended over the greater part, if not the whole of Spain. Their best historians, however, derive the colony from whom they sprang, from the oriental Iberia, which was, as formerly remarked, situated between the Caspian and the Black Sea, and which was what we at this day call Georgia.† They were anciently called Iberians.‡ At this hour the proper names of rivers, and of remarkable places, are the same as in ancient Armenia. At what time this colony arrived,

* Scaliger de Europ. Linguis.

† Henao, lib. i.

‡ Saint Jerome.

arrived, historians do not pretend to say. The Phœnicians certainly got footing among them one thousand five hundred years before Christ ; and they found that the Celts had not only many establishments among the Iberians, but that they had blended their name with that of the Iberians, and consequently formed the compounds Celtiberia, and Celtiberians.*

By venerable Bede we are informed, that the inhabitants of Britain in his time (and he died in the year 735) both studied and preached the gospel in the languages of five different nations. These languages were, the Saxon, British, Scottish, Pictish, and Roman. It has been the fashion with some, however, to despise Bede : but, for no better reason that I know of, than that his knowledge, if we consider the age, was extensive and profound. His works, indeed, were tinged with the gloom of the cloister ; yet, evidently, they are not divested of perspicuity. And further, I am greatly mistaken, if I shall not have it in my power to convince you, on unquestionable authority, that he was right ; and that though unassuming religion guided the dictates of his pen, he yet was as tenacious

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of

* Diodor. Sicul. Lucan. lib. 14.

of truth, as those whose pages at the present hour teem with infidelity. Bede was born not much above fifty years after St. Augustin had arrived in the isle of Thanet, to pursue the conversion of the Britons to the Christian faith. Ethelbert king of Kent, and most of his people, were baptized by Augustin, at Canterbury, in 597; many years, indeed, subsequent to the first introduction of Christianity into the island.

The Romans, on their getting a permanency of footing in Britain, put in practice a measure of policy, which they never lost sight of. So sensible were they of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue.* The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the east, the provinces were less docile than in the west. The language of the Romans, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia, that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the

* Pliny.

the mountains, or among peasants. * The east, however, adhered to their own languages; and thus two species of language exercised at the same time a separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the current dialect of public transaction. †

After the reduction of that part of Britain, accounted worth the trouble of acquiring, the first great object of the Romans was to preserve the conquest by a stationary military force. For this purpose the inhabitants were compleatly disarmed, and a standing army, composed of three legions, amounting to upwards of thirty-six thousand foot, and six thousand horse, was introduced, and regularly maintained. ‡ In the whole province, there are said to have been an hundred and fifty Roman stations, which were connected with inferior fortresses, erected at convenient distances, and garrisoned with regular troops. In the public administration of the province, the Roman magistrates assumed an absolute authority; but, in matters of private property, the British chiefs and petty princes appear for some time after the conquest, to have

H h 4

retained

* Strabo. Tacitus. † Gibbon.

‡ Horsley, Brit. Rom.

retained their ancient jurisdiction. But this gradually became more circumscribed, and seems at last to have been entirely annihilated. The continual introduction of foreigners brought along with it the fashions, acquired in other parts of the empire; and to court the favour of the ruling powers, an acquiescence in their customs and prejudices was necessary. “Thus,” says Tacitus, “in the time of Agricola, the youth of distinguished families were instructed in the liberal arts; insomuch, that those who but lately were ignorant of the language, began to acquire a relish for the eloquence of Rome: they became fond of appearing in the dress of the Romans, and by degrees were led to imitate their vices, their luxury, and effeminacy, as well as their elegancies and magnificence. *

Dr. Henry, who has made a very full collection of the facts mentioned by ancient authors, concerning the provincial government of Britain, supposes its annual revenue amounted to no less than two millions sterling. A sum nearly as great as that which was derived from Egypt, in the time of the father of Cleopatra. † But this calculation is built upon the authority of Lipsius. Nor are there perhaps any accounts transmitted

* Vit. Agric.

† Strabo.

mitted by historians, from which the point can be accurately determined.* The Britons excelled in agriculture. They exported great quantities of corn, for supplying the armies in other parts of the empire. They had linen and woollen manufactures; and their mines of lead and tin were inexhaustible.† And further we know, that Britain, in consequence of her supposed resources, was sometimes reduced to such distress, by the demands of government, as to be obliged to borrow money at an exorbitant interest. In this trade, the best citizens of Rome were not ashamed to engage; and, though prohibited by law, Seneca, whose philosophy, it seems, was not incompatible with the love of money, lent the Britons at one time above three hundred and twenty thousand pounds. ‡

From the conquest, the Britons made use, in general, of letters similar to those of the Greek and Roman; and they continued to do so, till the time that the Saxons came and possessed themselves of the greater part of the island. From that time to the Norman invasion, their writing was a kind of Roman Saxon, British Saxon, and Danish Saxon. William I. introduced

* Proff. Millar.

† Henry.

‡ Xiphilinus in Nerone.

duced corrupted Lombardic letters, which then prevailed in the southern parts of Europe, and which have been called by us, Norman writing. From the twelfth century, till after the invention of printing, the modern Gothic was used, when the Latin language was written. * Of the monuments of writing remaining with us, one of the most venerable, though not the most ancient, is what is called Domesday Book. Alfred, about the year 900, composed a book of a similar nature, of which this is, in some measure, a copy. Domesday Book was begun, by order of the Norman William, in 1080, and completed in 1086. † The very oldest Saxon MSS. in fact, however, extant, I am told, is a glossary on the Evangelists, written by Eadfride, bishop of Holy Island, Anno 700. There is also a beautiful MSS. of the New Testament in Saxon, about one thousand years old, which belonged to the library of the Abbey of Morbac, in France.

The Saxons used their language from their entrance into the island, A. D. 450, till the irruption of the Danes, for the space of three hundred and thirty years. One relic of this remains, inserted in Alfred's version of Bede's Ecclesiastical

* Astle.

† Sir Henry Spelman.

siastical History.* The Danes used theirs from the Danish to the Norman invasion, and of this many considerable versions, both in prose and verse, are still preserved.† Then came the Norman, which swallowed the whole. So low, indeed, were the natives reduced after the Norman conquest, and so universally were they subjected to neglect and indigence, that the English name became a term of reproach : and several generations elapsed, before one family of Saxon pedigree was raised to any distinguished honour, or could so much as attain the rank of baronage.‡ They even suffered the Saxon writing to fall into discredit and disuse, which, by degrees, became so difficult and obsolete, that few besides the oldest men could understand the character.§ It became the common practice for the transcribers of Saxon books, to change the Saxon orthography for the Norman.|| The nobles, in the reign of Henry II. constantly sent their children into France, lest they should contract habits of barbarism in their speech.¶

But I have wandered a little from the right line. The emperor Maximinian of the Romans
lost

* Lib. iv. cap. 24.

† Hick. Thesau.

‡ Brompt. Chron.

§ Ingulph.

|| MSS. Bodl.

¶ Warton.

lost Britain by the usurpation of Carausius, who was his admiral. Carausius assumed the purple in Britain, and the title of Augustus. Britain was now greatly celebrated for its fine harbours, the temperature of its climate, and the fertility of its soil; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich pastures, covered with innumerable flocks; and its woods freed from wild beasts and serpents.* It was held by Carausius for seven years, from A. D. 287 to 294. Under his command, (Diocletian and his colleague finding it convenient to resign to him the sovereignty of Britain, yet admitting him to a participation of the imperial honours) Britain, destined in a future age to obtain the empire of the sea, assumed its natural and respectable station as a maritime power.†

Afterwards, while Italy was ravaged by the Goths, and a succession of feeble tyrants oppressed the provinces beyond the Alps, the British island separated itself from the body of the Roman empire.‡ The regular forces, which guarded so remote a province, had been gradually withdrawn, and Britain was abandoned without defence to the Saxon pirates, and to irrup-

* Panegy.

† Gibbon.

‡ Zosimus.

irruptions from Ireland and Caledonia. Afflicted by similar calamities, and actuated by the same spirit, the Armorican provinces imitated the example of their neighbours, expelled the Roman magistrates, and established a free government. The independence of Britain was soon confirmed by Honorius himself, the lawful emperor of the west, and by letters, he committed to the new states the care of their own safety. * This was in 409. The Britons continued to rule themselves, during a period of forty years, under the authority of the clergy, the nobles, and the municipal towns, until the descent of the Saxons in 449.

“After their separation from the Romans, several of the British chiefs,” says Gibbon, “might be the genuine posterity of ancient kings, and many more might be tempted to adopt this honourable genealogy, and to vindicate their hereditary claims, which had been suspended by the usurpation of the Cæsars. Their situation and their hopes would dispose them to affect the dress, the language, and the customs of their ancestors. But these princes relapsed into barbarism, and innumerable tyrants infested Britain after the dissolution of the Roman
man

* Gibbon.

man government. “*Britannia fertilis provincia tyrannorum*,” was the expression of Jerom in the year 415. The arts and religion, the laws and language, which the Romans had so carefully planted in Britain, were extirpated by their barbarous successors.* The practice, and even the remembrance of Christianity was abolished. Yet these very Britons struggled gloriously with the Saxons for one hundred and seventy years. And what is remarkable, notwithstanding their fears and pusillanimity, when first abandoned by the Romans, and when not being able to withstand the Picts and the Scots, who invaded them from Ireland, they wrote the letter, entitled *Gemitus Britannorum*, where, after explaining their various calamities, they at length say, “*Repellunt barbari ad mare, repellit mare ad barbaros; inter hæc oriuntur duo genera funerum, aut jugulamur, aut mergimur.*” Yet these very Britons defended themselves with more obstinate resolution, than, upon the downfall of the Roman empire, was discovered by any of the other provinces, though supported by the armies of Rome.† Thus, while the continent of Europe and Africa yielded without resistance to the barbarians, the British island, alone and unaided, maintained a long and vigorous, though an unsuccessful

* Decline and Fall Rom. Emp.

† Proff. Millar.

cessful struggle against the formidable pirates, who, almost at the same instant, assaulted the northern, the eastern, and the southern coasts. Hengist hoped to achieve the conquest of Britain; but his ambition, in an active reign of thirty-five years, was confined to the possession of Kent. After a war of an hundred years, the independent Britons still occupied the whole of the western coast, from the wall of Antoninus, to the extreme promontory of Cornwall; and the principal cities of the inland country still opposed the arms of the invaders. But, winning their way by slow and painful efforts, the Saxons, the Angles, and their various confederates, advanced, at length, from the north, from the east, and from the south, till their victorious banners were united in the center of the island. Beyond the Severn, the Britons still asserted their national freedom, which survived the heptarchy, and even the monarchy of the Saxons. The bravest warriors, who preferred exile to slavery, found a secure refuge in the mountains of Wales; and the reluctant submission of Cornwall, and the rest of the country, was delayed for ages.*

* Gibbon.

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